

CHAPTER 5

GREEN BELT

BACKGROUND

- 5.1 Green Belts are areas of land near to and around major cities which planning policies seek to keep permanently open. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by restricting inappropriate development. Whilst landscape quality is not a material factor in their designation, Green Belts have an important role to play in retaining attractive areas of countryside. They also provide opportunities for access to the countryside and outdoor sport and recreation. Green Belts have now formed an essential part of planning policy for more than four decades and can help in shaping patterns of urban development, protecting the countryside and in assisting in a movement towards more sustainable patterns of urban development.
- 5.2 Harrogate District incorporates parts of the West Yorkshire and York Green Belts. The West Yorkshire Green Belt was originally established in the 1960's. It extends over the southern fringe of the District and includes the narrow gap between the towns of Harrogate and Knaresborough. The main purposes of the Green Belt as it affects this District are to check the further growth of the West Yorkshire conurbation, and to protect the special character of the towns of Harrogate and Knaresborough and prevent them from merging. The Green Belt in the Harrogate and Knaresborough area was reviewed in the Harrogate and Knaresborough Local Plan adopted in December 1992.
- 5.3 The south-eastern part of the District lies within the York Green Belt, the main purpose of which is to protect the special character of the City. The Green Belt was defined in the County Council's York Green Belt Local Plan. Though approved as interim policy for the purposes of development control, this Plan will not be adopted. Instead the York Green Belt is to be formally established through preparation of local plans for the City of York and surrounding districts, including this document.

POLICY CONTEXT

- 5.4 Revised PPG2 (Green Belts) sets out the Government's planning position, upon which policies contained within this Local Plan have been based. This describes the purposes of Green Belts and gives guidance on designating and controlling development within such areas. The revised PPG2 emphasises the intention of Green Belt policy to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. It also gives policy a more positive thrust by specifying for the first time objectives of land use in Green Belts.
- 5.5 The North Yorkshire County Structure Plan identifies the general extent of the North Yorkshire Green Belt (Policy E8). It also gives guidance on the definition of precise boundaries (Policy E8a) and identifies those forms of development considered suitable in Green Belts (Policy E9). Finally, Policy E10 sets out the County Council's approach to the expansion of settlements within the Green Belt.

OBJECTIVES

- 5.6 The Council's main objectives for policies relating to Green Belt are as follows:
- 1) **TO DEFINE THE PRECISE AREA TO WHICH GREEN BELT POLICIES APPLY WITHIN THE DISTRICT.**
 - 2) **TO STRICTLY CONTROL DEVELOPMENT IN THE GREEN BELT TO PREVENT URBAN SPRAWL AND KEEP LAND PERMANENTLY OPEN.**
 - 3) **TO IMPROVE THE ENVIRONMENTAL, AMENITY AND RECREATIONAL VALUE OF THE GREEN BELT.**

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.7 Urban sprawl can have a serious detrimental effect upon the natural and built environment through the loss of large areas of valuable countryside and the merging of distinct areas of development into an indefinite, characterless mass. The designation of Green Belts and overall strategy to afford long-term protection to these areas seek to promote greater efficiency in the use of land and more sustainable patterns of urban growth. Whilst seeking to minimise intrusion within the Green Belt, the policies contained within this chapter recognise that it would be unreasonable to prohibit re-use or redevelopment of existing developed sites where this would not detract from the openness of the Green Belt and may afford environmental or other benefits.

POLICIES AND PROPOSALS

EXTENT OF THE GREEN BELT

POLICY GB1

THE AREAS SHOWN ON THE PROPOSALS MAP ARE DESIGNATED AS GREEN BELT AND POLICIES GB2-7 WILL BE APPLIED THEREIN.

Justification

- 5.8 *Harrogate District incorporates parts of two different Green Belts, namely the West Yorkshire Green Belt and the York Green Belt.*
- 5.9 *The extent of Green Belt in Harrogate District has been established in earlier development plans. The Green Belt between Harrogate and Knaresborough and along the southern boundary of the district was originally established by the West Riding County Development Plan: First Review (1966). With respect to the boundaries of the West Yorkshire Green Belt approved as part of the Harrogate and Knaresborough Local Plan, a slight amendment has been made to exclude the site of the former Pannal Auction Mart, now redeveloped for housing. The Green Belt around the City of York was approved in principle in 1980 as part of the North Yorkshire County Structure Plan. The detailed boundary of this Green Belt has been defined through the York Green Belt Local Plan, approved by the County Council in March 1995 as interim policy for development control purposes and is expected to be formally established through the preparation of individual district-wide local plans. The general extent of the Green Belt has not been changed from that shown in these development plans.*
- 5.10 *Government guidance advises that detailed Green Belt boundaries defined in adopted local plans or earlier approved development plans should be altered only exceptionally. The Green Belt around York as identified on the Proposals Map reflects the boundaries informally approved by the County Council in the York Green Belt Local Plan. Minor changes have been necessary to the West Yorkshire Green Belt to ensure that the boundary follows readily recognisable features such as roads, streams, field boundaries etc. These changes are outlined below, with further details available on request to the Council's Forward Planning Section. (There are also changes proposed for village insets (or Green Belt windows) - these are described within the justification to Policy GB5).*
- i. PLAYING FIELDS/NORTH-EAST OTLEY**
- former boundary:- cuts across agricultural land and playing fields often following no recognisable feature on the ground.*
- new boundary:- following unmade road on the edge of built-up area.*

ii. NORTH OF PROPERTIES ON RIVERSIDE DRIVE, OTLEY

former boundary:- cuts through the field east of Lady Close following no recognisable feature on the ground.

new boundary:- following rear curtilage boundaries of Riverside Drive.

iii. RIVER WASHBURN/NORTH OF LEATHLEY

former boundary:- follows no recognisable feature on the ground from Lindley Bridge eastwards until crossing the River Washburn.

new boundary:- following the southern riverbank of the River Washburn.

iv. LAND SOUTH OF LINDLEY WOOD RESERVOIR/NORTH OF FARNLEY

former boundary:- follows an existing broken tree line and hedgerow.

new boundary:- following a continuous hedgerow and fence.

v. HALL LANE/NORTH-WEST ASKWITH

former boundary:- follows an unmetalled track and cuts through a field following no recognisable features on the ground.

new boundary:- following more durable features including fences and a strong tree line.

vi. LAND TO NORTH OF SPOFFORTH

former boundary:- follows no recognisable features on the ground between Harrogate Road and drain/hedge.

new boundary:- whilst still following no recognisable features on the ground, linking Harrogate Road to a more definable point of a hedge, fence and drain.

vii. PARK MOUNT/SOUTH OF SPOFFORTH

former boundary:- follows the southern boundaries of Park Road and the dismantled railway.

new boundary:- following the rear curtilage buildings of Park Mount and housing immediately to the north as far as Park Lane.

THE CONTROL OF DEVELOPMENT IN THE GREEN BELT**POLICY GB2**

~~WITHIN THE GREEN BELT, APART FROM DEVELOPMENT ALLOWED UNDER POLICIES GB4 TO GB7 OF THIS LOCAL PLAN, PLANNING PERMISSION WILL ONLY BE GRANTED FOR THE ERECTION OF NEW BUILDINGS, OR REDEVELOPMENT OF EXISTING BUILDINGS, WHICH ARE NECESSARY FOR AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY USES OR WHICH ARE ESSENTIAL FACILITIES FOR ANY OF THE FOLLOWING:~~

~~A) OUTDOOR SPORT AND RECREATION~~

~~B) CEMETERIES~~

~~C) OTHER USES OF LAND WHICH PRESERVE THE OPENNESS OF THE GREEN BELT AND ARE COMPATIBLE WITH THE PURPOSES OF INCLUDING LAND IN THE GREEN BELT.~~

~~PROPOSALS FOR THE RE-USE OF BUILDINGS WITHIN THE GREEN BELT SHOULD NOT HAVE A MATERIALLY GREATER IMPACT THAN THE PRESENT USE ON THE OPENNESS OF THE GREEN BELT, NOR THE PURPOSES OF INCLUDING LAND IN IT AND WILL ALSO BE ASSESSED AGAINST THE CRITERIA IN POLICY C16.~~

Justification

- 5.11 *The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open.*
- 5.12 *This policy has been formulated in accordance with PPG2, which represents the latest government thinking on development appropriate within Green Belt.*
- 5.13 *The West Yorkshire Green Belt around Harrogate and Knaresborough serves three main purposes:*
- a) *checking the further growth of the West Yorkshire conurbation by protecting the open land between the northern suburbs of Leeds and Bradford, and Harrogate;*
 - b) *preventing the neighbouring towns of Harrogate and Knaresborough from merging; and*
 - c) *protecting the setting and special character of the towns of Harrogate and Knaresborough.*
- 5.14 *The main purpose of the York Green Belt is to safeguard the setting and special character of the historic city of York.*
- 5.15 *PPG2 sets out the general purposes of including land in Green Belt, which are:*
- i) *to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;*
 - ii) *to prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another;*
 - iii) *to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;*
 - iv) *to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and*
 - v) *to assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.*
- This requires the strict control of development, as indicated in this policy. In relation to land uses A), B) and C), PPG2 indicates that only new buildings which are **essential facilities** for these otherwise generally open land uses will be allowed. It continues by stating that each application for essential facilities should be considered on its merits, bearing in mind the purposes of including land in Green Belts, to establish whether or not the building is genuinely required. Possible examples for outdoor sport are given as small changing rooms, small stables or unobtrusive spectator accommodation.*
- 5.16 *The re-use of buildings will not generally prejudice the openness of the Green Belt, providing there are no requirements for extending existing buildings and the associated use of land surrounding the building (e.g. storage) will not conflict with Green Belt purposes. However, if, in approving the re-use of agricultural buildings for non-agricultural purposes, the Council considers that a proliferation of farm buildings constructed under permitted development rights could have a seriously damaging effect on the openness of the Green Belt then it may be necessary to attach a condition or complete a legal agreement withdrawing these rights for new farm buildings in respect of that particular agricultural unit or holding. Policies H11, H12, TR3 and TR4 give the Local Plan approach to gypsy sites, residential mobile homes and caravan sites in the Green Belt.*
- 5.17 *Other uses of land which are compatible with the purpose of the Green Belt are those which are appropriate to a rural area and require minimal or no built form, retain the open character of the area, and have no adverse effect on the setting and special character of Harrogate, Knaresborough and York.*

ENGINEERING, OTHER OPERATIONS AND CHANGE IN USE OF LAND IN THE GREEN BELT**POLICY GB3**

~~WITHIN THE GREEN BELT PLANNING PERMISSION WILL NOT BE GRANTED FOR THE CARRYING OUT OF ENGINEERING OR OTHER OPERATIONS, OR FOR MATERIAL CHANGES IN THE USE OF LAND, WHICH COMPROMISE THE OPENNESS OF THE GREEN BELT OR THE PURPOSE OF INCLUDING LAND IN THE GREEN BELT.~~

Justification

- 5.18 ~~This policy reflects the guidance in PPG2 that inside a Green Belt approval should not be given, except in very special circumstances, for engineering, other forms of operational development, or the making of any material change in the use of land, which would adversely affect the character and function of the Green Belt. In this respect, the only uses which would generally be considered acceptable in principle within the Green Belt are those identified in Policy GB2. The purposes of including land in Green Belt within Harrogate District are set out in the justification to that policy. Minerals extraction within the Green Belt need not be inappropriate development; applications are to be determined by North Yorkshire County Council (the Mineral Planning Authority), having regard to the policies of the Structure Plan and the Minerals Local Plan. Where consulted, the Council will oppose proposals which compromise the openness of, and conflict with the purposes of including land in, the Green Belt and otherwise seek to ensure high standards of environmental protection and site restoration are observed.~~

REQUIREMENTS OF DEVELOPMENT IN THE GREEN BELT**POLICY GB4**

~~PROPOSALS FOR DEVELOPMENT OR REDEVELOPMENT WHICH ARE CONSIDERED APPROPRIATE IN THE GREEN BELT WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED WHERE IT CAN BE SHOWN THAT THE SCALE, LOCATION AND DESIGN OF ANY BUILDING OR STRUCTURE WOULD NOT DETRACT FROM THE OPEN CHARACTER AND VISUAL AMENITY OF THE GREEN BELT OR PREJUDICE THE PURPOSES FOR WHICH IT WAS DESIGNATED.~~

~~DEVELOPMENT OR REDEVELOPMENT SHOULD ASSIST IN FULFILLING THE OBJECTIVES FOR THE USE OF LAND IN GREEN BELT.~~

Justification

- 5.19 ~~Whilst proposals may be acceptable in principle within the Green Belt, their scale, location or design may conflict with the purposes of the Green Belt. The purposes of including land in Green Belt within Harrogate District are set out in the justification in Policy GB2.~~
- 5.20 ~~PPG2 indicates that when any large-scale development or redevelopment of land occurs in the Green Belt it should be carried out in such a way that it contributes as far as possible to the objectives of the use of land in Green Belts. The objectives stated in PPG2 are:~~
- ~~• to provide opportunities for access to the open countryside for the urban population;~~
 - ~~• to promote the use of land near urban areas for outdoor sport and recreation;~~
 - ~~• to retain attractive landscapes, and enhance landscapes, near to where people live;~~
 - ~~• to improve damaged and derelict land around towns;~~
 - ~~• to secure nature conservation interest; and~~
 - ~~• to retain land for agricultural, forestry and related purposes.~~
- 5.21 ~~Planning obligations consistent with DoE Circular 1/97 may be used to offset the loss of or impact on any amenity present on a site prior to development (see Policy IMP3).~~

DEVELOPMENT WITHIN SETTLEMENTS IN THE GREEN BELT**POLICY GB5**

~~IN THE VILLAGES OF ASKWITH, FOLLIFOOT, HUBY, KIRKBY OVERBLOW, LONG MARSTON, NORTH RIGTON AND SICKLINGHALL NEW BUILDING WILL BE RESTRICTED TO INFILLING WITHIN THE AREA DEFINED BY THE DEVELOPMENT LIMITS FOR THE VILLAGE, AS SHOWN ON THE PROPOSALS MAP.~~

~~IN THE VILLAGE OF BECKWITHSHAW NEW BUILDING WILL BE RESTRICTED TO INFILLING WITHIN THE BUILT CONFINES OF THE SETTLEMENT.~~

~~IN ALL OTHER SETTLEMENTS IN THE GREEN BELT POLICY GB2 WILL APPLY.~~

~~WITHIN ALL SETTLEMENTS IN THE GREEN BELT ANY DEVELOPMENT, REDEVELOPMENT OR CONVERSIONS WILL BE EXPECTED TO:~~

- ~~A) NOT HARM THE OPENNESS OF THE GREEN BELT OR ANY OF THE PURPOSES FOR INCLUDING THE AREA IN THE GREEN BELT; AND~~
- ~~B) BE OF A SCALE, DENSITY, LAYOUT AND DESIGN APPROPRIATE TO THE LOCALITY AND TO THE FORM AND CHARACTER OF THE SETTLEMENT OF WHICH IT IS PART; AND~~
- ~~C) PROVIDE A SATISFACTORY LEVEL OF RESIDENTIAL AMENITY; AND~~
- ~~D) NOT RESULT IN THE LOSS OF OPEN SPACE OF RECREATIONAL OR AMENITY VALUE IN CONFLICT WITH POLICIES R1 OR HD12 OF THE PLAN; AND~~
- ~~E) ACCORD WITH ALL OTHER RELEVANT POLICIES OF THE PLAN.~~

Justification

- 5.22 *This policy reflects the advice contained in PPG2 on how development plans should treat existing settlements in the Green Belt. In addition, the development of small-scale affordable housing within, or immediately adjoining these settlements will be permitted in accordance with Policy H8.*
- 5.23 *Development limits giving appropriate infill boundaries have been defined for most of these settlements to avoid dispute over whether particular sites are covered by infill policies. Development limits have not been defined for Beckwithshaw as the tight built form of this settlement is such that it is clear where infill would be appropriate.*
- 5.24 *Within the remaining settlements in the Green Belt it is proposed that no new development should take place beyond that allowed for by Policies GB2, GB3 and GB6.*
- 5.25 *The former West Yorkshire Green Belt boundary excluded, as insets, the settlements of Follifoot, Kirkby Overblow and Sicklinghall. Work on settlement policy in this Local Plan concluded that these settlements could not be expanded without harm to their form and character and that they were not appropriate for housing or employment land allocations. Consequently, and in accordance with the guidance given in PPG2, Green Belt is proposed to be carried across or 'washed over' these settlements.*

EXISTING DWELLINGS IN THE GREEN BELT**POLICY GB6**

~~THE EXTENSION AND ALTERATION OF EXISTING DWELLINGS WITHIN THE GREEN BELT WILL BE PERMITTED PROVIDED THAT THE PROPOSAL:~~

- ~~A) WOULD NOT CAUSE UNDUE VISUAL INTRUSION IN THE GREEN BELT; AND~~
- ~~B) IS AN APPROPRIATE ADDITION TO THE EXISTING DWELLING IN TERMS OF DESIGN AND MATERIALS; AND~~
- ~~C) IS SMALL IN SCALE COMPARED WITH THE ORIGINAL DWELLING AND SHOULD NOT FACILITATE THE DIVISION OF THE BUILDING INTO TWO OR MORE DWELLINGS.~~

THE REPLACEMENT OF DWELLINGS IN THE GREEN BELT WILL BE PERMITTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH POLICY H20 OF THE LOCAL PLAN.

Justification

- 5.26 *The Green Belt includes a significant number of existing dwellings. In such cases it is considered reasonable to allow a degree of expansion and/or alteration in response to changing circumstances, as long as this is consistent with Green Belt purposes. PPG2 indicates that the extension, alteration or replacement of dwellings is acceptable in Green Belts, provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building. In assessing whether an extension would be proportionate to the original dwelling, proposals will be considered on their merits, but in general those involving additions in excess of 50% of the size of the original will not normally be permitted (see Policy H15).*
- 5.27 *This policy does not affect 'permitted development rights', as granted by the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995.*

MAJOR DEVELOPED SITES IN THE GREEN BELT

See Selective Alteration to HDLP (2004) for a revision of this policy

POLICY GB7

THE FOLLOWING SITES, AS SHOWN ON THE PROPOSALS MAP, ARE IDENTIFIED AS MAJOR DEVELOPED SITES IN THE GREEN BELT. PROPOSALS FOR THE LIMITED INFILLING OR REDEVELOPMENT OF SUCH SITES WILL NOT BE INAPPROPRIATE DEVELOPMENT IN THE GREEN BELT PROVIDED THAT:

- A) THE PROPOSAL WOULD HAVE NO GREATER IMPACT THAN THE EXISTING OR FORMER DEVELOPMENT ON THE OPENNESS OF THE GREEN BELT, NOR THE PURPOSES OF INCLUDING LAND IN THE GREEN BELT AND, WHERE POSSIBLE, HAVE LESS.**
- B) THE PROPOSAL WOULD NOT INJURE THE VISUAL AMENITY OF THE GREEN BELT AND, IN THE CASE OF REDEVELOPMENT, WOULD RESULT IN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT AND CONTRIBUTE TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE OBJECTIVES FOR THE USE OF LAND IN THE GREEN BELT.**
- C) ANY NEW BUILDINGS AS PART OF A REDEVELOPMENT SCHEME DO NOT OCCUPY A LARGER AREA OF THE SITE THAN, NOR EXCEED THE HEIGHT OF, THE ORIGINAL BUILDINGS.**
- D) WHEREVER POSSIBLE EXISTING BUILDINGS OF ARCHITECTURAL OR HISTORIC INTEREST ARE RETAINED AND RE-USED.**

WEST YORKSHIRE GREEN BELT:

**RUDDING HOUSE AND ASSOCIATED BUILDINGS, RUDDING PARK, FOLLIFOOT
FORMER THISTLE HILL HOSPITAL, KNARESBOROUGH
FORMER MIDDLETON HOSPITAL, MIDDLETON
PLANT AND MACHINERY BUSINESS, BRADFORD ROAD, RIFFA
HENSHAW'S COLLEGE, BOGS LANE, STARBECK**

Justification

- 5.28 *Green Belts can contain some major developed sites such as factories, water and sewage treatment works, military establishments, civil airfields, hospitals, research and education establishments and similar institutions.*
- 5.29 *PPG2 indicates that the limited infilling or redevelopment of these sites is appropriate development within the Green Belt if identified in local plans. The list of sites identified in this policy is based upon interpretation of PPG2. The sites are marked by a letter 'D' on the Proposals Map.*

- 5.30 *Limited infilling at major developed sites in continuing use may help to secure jobs and prosperity without further prejudicing the Green Belt. The redevelopment of major developed sites in Green Belts, whether they are redundant or in continuing use, may offer the opportunity for environmental improvement. However, as indicated in Policies E2 and C17, in order to provide a reasonable supply of employment opportunities and minimise the development of new greenfield land, sites and premises in existing or former employment use should, wherever possible, be retained in that use; in all other instances re-use or redevelopment for employment purposes will be encouraged.*
- 5.31 *PPG2 states that redevelopment should contribute to the achievement of the objectives for the use of land in Green Belts (these objectives are set out in the justification to Policy GB4) including making adequate provision for the maintenance of landscaped areas where appropriate. Redevelopment or infilling, by reason of its siting, materials or design, should not injure the visual amenity of the Green Belt.*
- 5.32 *The new buildings should not occupy a larger area of the site nor exceed the height of the original buildings. For this purpose the relevant area is the aggregate ground floor area ('footprint') of the existing buildings, excluding temporary buildings, open spaces with direct external access between wings of a building, and areas of hardstanding. In cases where buildings are demolished rather than being left in a semi-derelict state pending decisions about their redevelopment, it will be necessary to keep suitable records. The character and dispersal of proposed redevelopment will need to be considered as well as its footprint. The location of the new buildings should be decided having regard to the purposes of including land in Green Belts, the objectives for the use of land in Green Belts, the main features of the landscape, and the need to integrate the new development with its surroundings.*
- 5.33 *Any proposals for partial redevelopment should be put forward in the context of comprehensive, long-term plans for the site as a whole.*
- 5.34 *Suitable re-use is to be preferred to redevelopment where the buildings are of architectural or historic interest. Any proposals for altering or demolishing listed buildings or which affect their settings should be considered in the light of the advice in PPG15 (Planning and the Historic Environment).*
- 5.35 *The effect of the proposed development on parks and gardens of special or historic interest is a material consideration in the determination of a planning application. The English Heritage register of historic parks and gardens lists sites of special importance which are to be strictly protected under Policy HD7A.*
- 5.36 *Conversion or redevelopment should not normally require additional expenditure by the public sector on the provision of infrastructure, nor should it overload local facilities such as schools and health care facilities. In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of any additional infrastructure requirements (e.g. roads) which may have significant adverse effects on the Green Belt, together with other material considerations, including the traffic and travel implications of redevelopment and the principles of sustainable development. Indeed, in the case of the site of the former Middleton Hospital, as the site is located within the Nidderdale AONB and not well placed to contribute towards achieving sustainable development and a reduction in car dependency there will be additional constraints on the extent of new building. Redevelopment should thus be modest compared with what was previously on the site.*