

## Appendix 5 – Green Belt Policy

5.101 Green Belt designation covers 77% of the area of Three Rivers. The fundamental aim of the Green Belt is to prevent urban sprawl **and coalescence of settlements** by keeping land permanently open. Within the Green Belt, there is a general presumption against inappropriate development which should not be approved except in very special circumstances.

~~5.102 The East of England Plan aims to reconcile growth in the region with the protection of the environment and the general extent of the Green Belt. It does not identify Three Rivers as an area requiring strategic review of the Green Belt.~~ Protection of the Green Belt and open countryside is a key objective of the Three Rivers Core Strategy. However, the Green Belt boundary is tightly drawn around urban areas, and local evidence has demonstrated that future development needs cannot be accommodated entirely within the urban area. **Paragraph 140 of the NPPF sets out that the exceptional circumstances are required for Green Belt boundaries to be altered. The Council has considered alternative options for meeting its identified housing need through prioritising development on suitable brownfield sites, optimising the density of development and through discussions with neighbouring authorities in accordance with Paragraph 141 of the NPPF. As such, the council considers that the exceptional circumstances for alterations to Green Belt boundaries have been met.**

5.103 Therefore, as set out in the Spatial Strategy, while the main focus for development in the District will be the main urban areas, there is also a need for some minor adjustments to the Green Belt boundary to accommodate growth in the most sustainable locations on the edge of existing settlements. Boundary changes are expected to provide land for housing and employment development and may also provide land for one or possibly two new reserve secondary school sites in the Rickmansworth Area, depending on the outcome of Hertfordshire County Council work on the potential to expand existing secondary school provision in the South West Hertfordshire area.

5.104 Detailed changes to the established Green Belt boundary will be made through the allocation of land for development by the Site Allocations Development Plan Document and are anticipated to result in a loss of no more than 1% of the area designated as Green Belt in the District. This is expected mainly as a result of new housing development on the edge of settlements in accordance with the Spatial Strategy.

~~5.105 While future development needs may require adjustment of Green Belt boundaries, the Local Plan also identifies two Major Developed Sites in the Green Belt at Leavesden Aerodrome and Maple Lodge Sewage Treatment Works. This designation acknowledges that development in these areas may be necessary over the Plan period for strategic and operational reasons. In this regard Major Developed Site in the Green Belt status for Maple Lodge Sewage Treatment Works will be retained.~~

## Preferred Policy Option 16

### Green Belt Policy

1) The revised Green Belt Boundary will be shown on the Policies Map.

2) The Council will protect the general extent of Three River's metropolitan green belt against inappropriate development, as defined by national policy.

~~(3) There is a general presumption against inappropriate development that would not preserve the openness of the Green Belt or which would conflict with the purposes of including land within it. Such development will not be permitted unless very special circumstances exist.~~ Inappropriate development will not be permitted in the green belt, unless very special circumstances are demonstrated to outweigh the potential harm, including harm to the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land within it.

(4) Development proposals, including those involving previously developed land and buildings in the Green Belt, will be considered in accordance with relevant national planning policy and more detailed provisions below.

(5) Measures to improve public access to the Green Belt, and to enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity will be encouraged. ~~Opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation will also be supported, provided that these would preserve the openness of the Green Belt and would not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.~~

(6) The following forms of development are exceptions to the definition of inappropriate development and will be permitted where they comply with other relevant policies in this Plan:

- a. Extension or alteration of an existing dwelling or other building, including provision of ancillary buildings within the curtilage of an existing dwelling or other building, provided the proposed development does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building in accordance with the factors noted in Appendix 2;
- b. Replacement of an existing dwelling or other building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces in accordance with the guidance in Appendix 2;
- c. Buildings or other structures which it has been demonstrated are reasonably necessary to support agricultural, horticultural or forestry use of the site;
- d. Appropriate buildings or facilities for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries, burial grounds and allotments, provided the proposed buildings and associated uses or activity would preserve the openness of the Green Belt and not conflict with the purposes of including land within it, by reason of their scale, design or siting.
- e. The re-use of existing buildings which are of permanent and substantial construction, provided the physical changes and associated uses and activity would preserve the openness of the Green Belt and not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.

- f. Limited infilling in villages or redevelopment of previously developed land where the new development would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development;
- g. Re-use of previously developed land to meet an identified affordable housing need within three rivers where the development would not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt;
- h. Limited affordable housing for local community needs, in accordance with housing policies in this plan such as rural exception sites or,
- i. Other forms of development specifically identified through national policy as exceptions to the definition of inappropriate development, including changes of use and engineering operations which preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.

#### ~~New and Replacement Buildings~~

~~(7) Within the Green Belt, approval will not be given for new buildings other than those specified in national policy except in very special circumstances.~~

~~(8) Further Guidance on the factors that will be considered in assessing applications for agricultural or forestry dwellings in the Green Belt is contained in Appendix 2.~~

~~(7) Replacement buildings in the Green Belt will only be permitted where the following criteria are met:~~

- ~~a) The replacement building is in the same use;~~
- ~~b) The replacement building is not materially larger than the original building in accordance with the guidance at Appendix 2; and~~
- ~~c) The replacement building would not be more harmful to the visual amenity and openness of the Green Belt by reason of its siting than the original building.~~

#### ~~Extensions and Alterations to Buildings~~

~~(8) In accordance with the factors noted at Appendix 2, extensions or alterations to buildings in the Green Belt that are disproportionate in size (individually or cumulatively) to the original building will not be permitted. The building's proximity and relationship to other buildings and whether it is already, or would become, prominent in the setting and whether it preserves the openness of the Green Belt will be taken into account.~~

~~(9) An ancillary residential outbuilding may be considered an extension for the purposes of Green Belt policy where located within 5m of the main dwellinghouse on the site.~~

~~In such cases, the outbuilding must also:~~

- ~~a) Be of a scale and design which is clearly subordinate to the dwelling and of a height and bulk such that the building would not adversely affect the openness of the Green Belt;~~
- ~~b) Be sited in an appropriate location that would not be prominent in the landscape and would not result in the spread of urbanising development;~~

c) Avoid features normally associated with the use of a building as a dwelling such as dormer windows.

#### Change of Use of Land

(10) Material changes in the use of land will only be supported where this would preserve the openness of the Green Belt and would not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. Proposals including the extension of residential curtilage within the Green Belt resulting in encroachment to the countryside will not be supported.

#### Re-Use of Buildings in the Green Belt

(11) The re-use of buildings in the Green Belt will only be supported where this would preserve the openness of the Green Belt and would not conflict with the purposes of including land within it, and where:

a) The building is of permanent and substantial construction and is suitable for reuse/conversion without extensive alteration, rebuilding and or extension;

b) The form, scale and general design of the building is in keeping with the surroundings and the proposals would not have a significant adverse effect on the openness of the Green Belt or appear excessively prominent, including as a consequence of any alterations/extensions;

c) Any change of use of associated land would comply with the provisions at part (10) of this policy and would not include open or agricultural land to provide new gardens/amenity space, and no doors w

d) Any associated parking/turning areas or modifications to access or landscaping would preserve the openness of the Green Belt and would not conflict with the purposes of including land within it; and

e) The scale of the proposed use would not have a detrimental effect on the locality (e.g. by noise, smell, bringing heavy traffic into narrow lanes or involving uses not appropriate to the Green Belt or areas of open land).