



**AGENDA ITEM: 9.**

**CABINET:**  
**17 March 2015**

**PLANNING COMMITTEE:**  
**19 March 2015**

---

**Report of:** Assistant Director Planning

**Relevant Managing Director:** Managing Director (Transformation)

**Relevant Portfolio Holder:** Councillor M Forshaw

**Contact for further information:** Peter Richards  
(Email: [peter.richards@westlancs.gov.uk](mailto:peter.richards@westlancs.gov.uk))

---

**SUBJECT: DEVELOPMENT IN THE GREEN BELT SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT**

---

Wards affected: Borough-wide

**1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To recommend the draft Development in the Green Belt Supplementary Planning Document ("the Green Belt SPD") for public consultation in May / June 2015.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS TO CABINET**

2.1 That the draft Green Belt SPD (Appendix A to this report) be approved for public consultation, subject to any amendments made by the Assistant Director Planning, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, as per recommendation 2.2 below.

2.2 That the Assistant Director Planning, be authorised, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, to make any necessary amendments to the Green Belt SPD, in the light of agreed comments from Planning Committee, before the document is published for consultation.

**3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS TO PLANNING COMMITTEE**

3.1 That the content of this report be considered and that agreed comments be referred to the Assistant Director Planning, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, for consideration of whether any amendments should be made to the draft SPD before the start of the public consultation period.

---

## 4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The majority of West Lancashire is designated as Green Belt. The Green Belt boundaries on the border between West Lancashire and Sefton / Knowsley were established through the Merseyside Green Belt Plan in 1983. The general extent of the Green Belt elsewhere in West Lancashire was designated through the adoption of the Central and North Lancashire Structure Plan, in 1993. Following this, detailed Green Belt boundaries were established around West Lancashire's towns and smaller settlements via a series of District / Borough Council approved local plans.
- 4.2 The Council adopted the West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027 (WLLP) on 16 October 2013. The WLLP is the development plan for West Lancashire, and sets out the scale, distribution and principles for the development of the Borough up to 2027. In order to ensure the delivery of necessary development in the Borough the WLLP amended the Green Belt boundary in several places in order to allocate land for development.
- 4.3 The WLLP does not, however, contain a specific policy in relation to development within the Green Belt. Instead it relies on national Green Belt policy, as set out in paragraphs 79-92 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). WLLP policy GN1 states: *"Development proposals within the Green Belt will be assessed against national policy and any relevant Local Plan policies"*.
- 4.4 The two previous Local Plans for West Lancashire (adopted 1999 and 2006) contained detailed Green Belt policies. In addition, there have been two supplementary planning guidance notes (SPGs) in place since 2000 / 2001 (namely the Domestic Extensions and Outbuildings and Replacement Dwellings in the Green Belt SPG; and the Stable Buildings in the Green Belt SPG). Whilst national Green Belt policy has remained largely unchanged since before 1999, the two SPGs are considered in need of updating and combining into a single SPD.

## 5.0 CURRENT POSITION

- 5.1 A draft Green Belt development SPD has been prepared. The proposed Green Belt SPD does not vary national policy, but adds a local interpretation of national policy by specifying the Borough Council's position with regard to certain details not specified in the NPPF, and adding further clarification with regard to certain NPPF Green Belt policies. The purpose of this SPD will be to provide:
- A "local take" on the types of development potentially permissible in the Green Belt under paragraphs 89 and 90 of the NPPF. It advises which WLLP policies will apply to such development. (For example, if a brownfield site in employment use was proposed for redevelopment as housing, WLLP policy GN4: Demonstrating Viability, and policy RS2: Affordable Housing would need

to be satisfied. In addition, policy IF4: Developer Contributions and other policies would be relevant);

- A local interpretation of NPPF terms such as what would constitute “disproportionate additions” to a building in the Green Belt (NPPF paragraph 89, bullet 3) or a “materially larger” replacement building (NPPF paragraph 89, bullet 4).

5.2 Significantly, the Green Belt SPD does not propose (or allow for) any changes to Green Belt boundaries in West Lancashire, as this can only be done through the adoption of a new Development Plan Document such as the Local Plan.

5.3 In accordance with Regulation 12(a) of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, the Council wrote to a number of statutory consultees and other interested parties during January and February 2015, advising of the Council’s intention to prepare an SPD on Development in the Green Belt, indicating what the SPD would be likely to contain, and asking for views on what topics the SPD should cover.

5.4 A total of 13 responses were received to this consultation. Most of these recorded no comments at this stage of the SPD production. The issues raised by those who did provide comments included:

- Concern about the conversion of redundant agricultural buildings to residential use;
- Green Belt land should be protected from development except in exceptional circumstances, and should be subject to stringent criteria;
- Concern regarding the impact of the erection of new agricultural buildings;
- Concern over development on previously developed sites within the Green Belt;
- Development should be prioritised on brownfield rather than greenfield Green Belt areas.

5.5 A summary of the comments received and the Council’s response to these comments (including how the issues raised are being addressed, or why they are not being addressed, in the SPD) is provided at Appendix B for Cabinet to take into account as they consider recommendation 2.1 above.

## **6.0 NEXT STEPS**

6.1 Assuming that Cabinet endorse the draft SPD for public consultation, the consultation is proposed to take place for six weeks, from Thursday 14 May – Friday 26 June 2015.

6.2 Following the consultation period, all comments submitted to the Council will be recorded, acknowledged and considered, and any necessary amendments to the SPD will be made. It is anticipated that the final SPD will be brought to Cabinet seeking authority to adopt in September 2015.

## **7.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS/COMMUNITY STRATEGY**

- 7.1 The purpose of the Green Belt SPD is to facilitate sustainable development in West Lancashire, consistent with the West Lancashire Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 7.2 Ensuring development in the Green Belt is in accordance with policy should help achieve the vision of the Sustainable Community Strategy, namely that West Lancashire should be the cleanest, safest, healthiest and greenest place in the country to live, work and enjoy.

## **8.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 The preparation of the Development in the Green Belt SPD (and consultation on it) can be resourced through the Planning Service's revenue budgets.

## **9.0 RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 9.1 Not having an up-to-date SPD which provides guidance on Green Belt issues could lead to developers challenging planning decisions relating to Green Belt development, and increase the possibility of unsuitable development in the Borough. The speedy preparation and adoption of this SPD should ensure that the above scenario is avoided.

---

---

### **Background Documents**

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Report.

### **Equality Impact Assessment**

There is a direct impact on members of the public. Therefore an Equality Impact Assessment is required. A formal equality impact assessment is attached as Appendix C to this report, the results of which have been taken into account in the Recommendations contained within this report.

### **Appendices**

- A. Draft Development in the Green Belt SPD
- B. Consultation Statement
- C. Equality Impact Assessment
- D. Minute of Cabinet held on 17 March 2015 (Planning Committee only)