



Supplementary Planning Document

Development in the Green Belt

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Preface

This document constitutes the 'Consultation Draft' version of the supplementary planning document. The Borough Council is seeking comments on the contents of this document from the public, developers and others with an interest in Green Belt issues.

The document, along with comments forms and related information, will be available during normal working hours at the Council offices and Public Libraries in West Lancashire, as well as on the Council's website. The consultation period runs from Thursday 14 May – Friday 26 June 2015.

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1. Introduction

1.1 What is a Supplementary Planning Document?

This Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on Green Belt development forms part of the suite of planning documents associated with the West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027 (WLLP or 'the Local Plan'). This SPD is subsidiary to the overarching Local Plan, which provides strategic and development management policies for West Lancashire. Once adopted, the SPD will be used by West Lancashire Borough Council in determining planning applications.

This SPD should be read alongside other relevant guidance, including the National Planning Policy Framework (the NPPF), Planning Practice Guidance, the West Lancashire Local Plan, and other SPDs, for example the West Lancashire Design Guide SPD (2008).

Some minor development is permitted by the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Amendment and Consequential Provisions) (England) Order 2014 without the need for a planning application. Such development is usually known as 'permitted development'. Home owners and developers who are considering such schemes are nonetheless encouraged to refer to the guidance in this SPD when considering even minor development. This guidance clarifies the implications of permitted development on future planning proposals in the Green Belt.

This SPD will not propose any changes to any Green Belt boundaries but will be used when making a judgment on planning applications put before the Council. However all applications will be judged on their merits and on a case by case basis.

1.2 Sustainability Appraisal

Since the Green Belt SPD will be based upon, and consistent with, national policy and does not propose any changes to any Green Belt boundaries, it is not considered that the Green Belt SPD requires its own Sustainability Appraisal or Strategic Environmental Assessment.

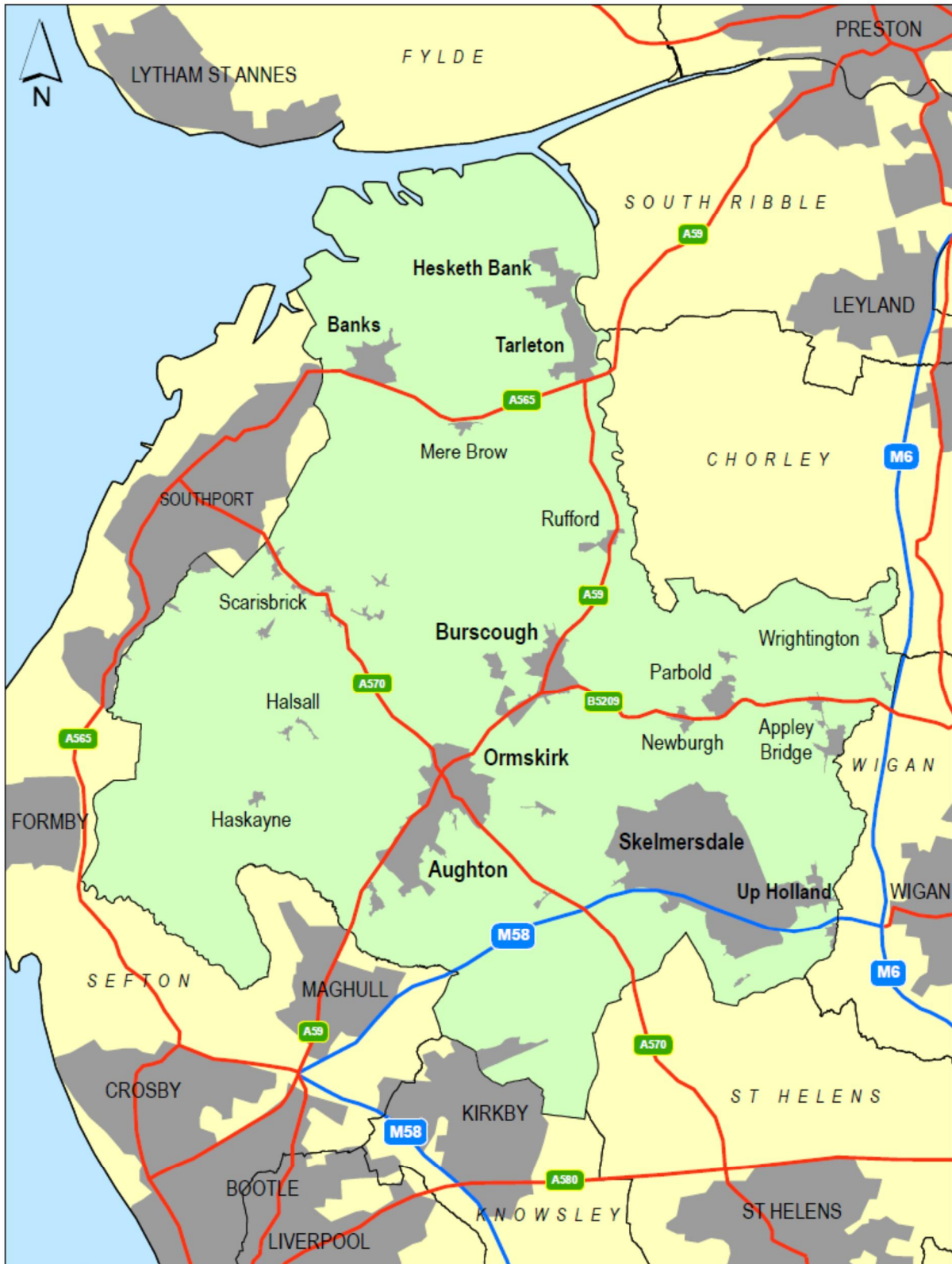
1.3 The Green Belt in West Lancashire

West Lancashire is predominantly rural in character, with scattered villages, the market town of Ormskirk, and the new town of Skelmersdale, and comprises the largest extent of highest grade farmland in the North West of England. It is this character and the Borough's proximity to a number of urban centres, including Liverpool and Preston that make it a popular place to live for those commuting both to Merseyside, Greater Manchester and to other parts of Lancashire.

The Green Belt in West Lancashire covers more than 90% of the total land in the Borough. The Green Belt boundaries where West Lancashire borders Sefton and 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 Policy 8(a)(v) of the Central and North Lancashire Structure Plan, adopted in March 1993. Following this, detailed Green Belt boundaries were established around West Lancashire's towns and smaller settlements via a series of area-specific local plans, adopted by the Borough Council.

The map overleaf illustrates the extent of the West Lancashire Green Belt and the settlement areas.



Map illustrating the extent of West Lancashire's Green Belt and settlement areas

Green Belt (West Lancashire)
 Settlements

Planning Policy in relation to the Green Belt

National Planning Policy

Paragraphs 79-92 of the NPPF set out national planning policy in relation to Green Belt. It is clear that the Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent the uncontrolled spread of urban areas by keeping land permanently open. The essential characteristics of the Green Belt are its openness and its permanence.

The Green Belt serves five purposes:

1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
2. To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
5. To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

The West Lancashire Green Belt Study 2011 demonstrates that virtually all Green Belt land adjacent to the settlements of West Lancashire fulfils at least one of the above purposes of the Green Belt.

In March 2014, the government introduced National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG), a web-based planning policy resource. NPPG provides extra detail and guidance to back up the national planning policies set out in the NPPF. NPPG may be updated periodically, but should always remain consistent with NPPF policy.

Local Planning Policy

The adopted Local Plan does not have a Green Belt policy as such. Instead, Policy GN1(b) states that development proposals within the Green Belt will be assessed against national policy and any relevant Local Plan policies.

The approach to considering development within the Green Belt

The approach to considering proposals for development in the Green Belt is to first ascertain whether or not the proposed development is appropriate in the Green Belt. Case Law¹ recognises that the NPPF does not define what constitutes inappropriate development in the Green Belt. Instead it identifies what may be acceptable forms of development (i.e. development capable of being not “inappropriate”), with all other forms of development therefore regarded as inappropriate by necessary implication.

¹ See *Fordent Holdings v. Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government* [2013] EWHC 2844 (Admin), paragraph 19

Note that where a proposed development contains individual elements that may be judged “not inappropriate”, these do not make the development as a whole appropriate². Development cannot be seen as acceptable in terms of Green Belt policy, merely because part of it is “not inappropriate”.

The table below sets out the types of development deemed “not inappropriate” in the Green Belt by paragraphs 89 and 90 of the NPPF, and highlights the relevant West Lancashire Local Plan policies that apply to such development and/or links to sections of this SPD which provide further information.

² See *Timmins / Lymn v. Gedling Borough Council* [2014] EWHC 654 (Admin)

Development type	Relevant WLLP Policies and further information
NPPF paragraph 89:	
<i>Buildings for agriculture and forestry</i>	Policy EC2 supports the continuing use of rural areas for employment use
<i>Facilities for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation</i>	Policy EN3 provides more detail about the Council's approach to providing open space and recreation facilities
<i>Extension or alteration of a building</i>	See section 2.6 on extensions in the Green Belt
<i>Replacement of a building</i>	See section 2.2 for replacement dwellings and 2.3 for all other buildings in the Green Belt
<i>Limited infilling in villages</i>	West Lancashire contains no villages within the Green Belt
<i>Limited affordable housing for local community needs</i>	<p>Under Policy RS1 very limited affordable housing (i.e. up to 4 units) may be permitted within the Green Belt where it can be proven that there are no suitable sites within the nearest adjacent settlement, in accordance with the sequential test in Policy GN5.</p> <p>The Council's Affordable Housing SPD will also provide further detailed advice on this subject.</p>
<i>Limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed sites (brownfield land)</i>	See section 2.3 for conversion of existing buildings, or section 2.4 for the redevelopment of vacant brownfield sites in the Green Belt
NPPF paragraph 90:	
<i>Mineral extraction</i>	Lancashire County Council has responsibility for identifying sites and policies for minerals development in the Borough. The WLLP contains a map showing where Mineral Safeguarding Areas have been designated within West Lancashire in the Adopted Joint Lancashire Minerals and Waste Development Framework.
<i>Local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location</i>	Lancashire County Council is responsible for transport policy within the Borough. The current Local Transport Plan 3 runs from 2011 – 2021. Policy IF2 seeks to support the strategic transport priorities for West Lancashire as well as more minor local priorities and specific local issues.
<i>Development brought forward under a Community Right to Build Order</i>	West Lancashire does not currently have any Community Right to Build Orders in operation. This will be monitored if the situation changes.

1.4 Impact of development upon the Green Belt

Openness

The term openness is taken to mean the absence of buildings or development³. Whether a development impacts upon openness is therefore an absolute test and is not concerned with the extent to which development is visible, aesthetically pleasing or camouflaged.⁴

With regard to the openness of the Green Belt, the Council will consider the impact of proposals on a case by case basis and the unique circumstances of the site. Redevelopment proposals should generally have no greater impact than the existing development on the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land within it, and where possible, have less impact.

In some instances, replacement buildings are desired elsewhere on a site. Sometimes this can have a greater or lesser impact on the perception of openness, dependent on their location. In these cases the Council will assess the existing site and the impact of any existing building. If the new position would not be in keeping with its surroundings, would be less in keeping or would have a greater impact upon the openness of the Green Belt, the proposal is less likely to be acceptable. However, if it is considered to have less impact upon openness, this is likely to weigh in favour of the application.

Very Special Circumstances

If the development is inappropriate, it is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in '**Very Special Circumstances**' which can only exist where the potential harm to the Green Belt by way of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations (NPPF paragraphs 87-88).

When attempting to demonstrate 'Very Special Circumstances', the onus is on the applicant to prove that the exceptional nature of the proposal outweighs the harm that it would cause to the Green Belt. Each argument will be judged on its own unique set of circumstances and any accepted case would not necessarily result in a precedent for similar arguments on the same or alternative sites.

Where development is permitted in the Green Belt on grounds of very special circumstances, the Council will reserve the right to remove permitted development rights for extensions and outbuildings to prevent future additions that cumulatively impact upon the openness of the Green Belt.

³ This approach has been used by Inspectors in West Lancashire cases. E.g. see decision letter for Bannister House Farm, Mere Brow (22 October 2014), paragraph 10 (Ref: APP/P2365/A/14/2217810)

⁴ Timmins / Lymn v Gedling Borough Council [2014] EWHC 654 (Admin) paragraph 74

Permitted Development within the Green Belt

There are certain forms of development that householders are able to carry out which do not need planning permission. These are set out in the Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2008. However this does not automatically apply to all buildings, for example:

- buildings not in residential use
- certain types of properties converted to residential use may have had their Permitted Development rights removed – this often applies to properties such as barn conversions and other recent buildings (including dwellings that have replaced older buildings)

Householders should consult the Planning Portal website and seek guidance from the Council on the need for planning permission before carrying out any extension or alteration work.

2.1. General Principles in relation to redevelopment of previously developed land in the Green Belt

Previously developed land can include vacant land and / or existing buildings.

The NPPF defines previously developed land as:

“Land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed) and any associated fixed surface infrastructure”.

Previously developed land **does not** include:

- land that is or has been occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings;
- private residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments;
- land that was previously developed but where the remains of the permanent or fixed surface infrastructure have blended into the landscape in the process of time
- waste disposal or landfill sites

West Lancashire has a number of previously developed (or ‘brownfield’) sites within the Green Belt. In line with the NPPF, the Council will consider redevelopment proposals of previously developed sites based on their impact upon the openness of the Green Belt.

The following policies deal with replacement dwellings, replacement non-residential buildings, conversions of buildings and redevelopment of brownfield sites. If the criteria in the policies are not met, proposals are unlikely to be successful unless the applicant can demonstrate very special circumstances. Although the policies will be the basis for making a judgment on planning applications put before the Council, it must be stressed that all applications will be judged on their merits on a case by case basis.

2.2 Replacement dwellings

POLICY GB1 – REPLACEMENT DWELLINGS IN THE GREEN BELT

A proposal for the replacement of an existing dwelling within the Green Belt must satisfy each of the following criteria:

- a) The existing dwelling is lawful and permanent in nature;
- b) The total volume of the replacement dwelling should not be more than 20% greater than the dwelling that it replaces. Outbuildings within 5m of the existing dwelling will be included within this volume calculation;
- c) The replacement dwelling should not materially harm the openness of the Green Belt through excessive scale or bulk. It should also be in keeping with the character of the area and appropriate in terms of design and materials;
- d) The curtilage of the replacement dwelling should be no larger than that established for the dwelling it replaces

- e) The replacement dwelling should be on or close to the site of the one it replaces, unless it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that an alternative location within the same curtilage will achieve significant environmental improvements or road safety benefits.

The applicant must submit to the Council details of the existing and proposed dwellings within a 'Green Belt Assessment', which should include:

- full details of the volume calculations (in cubic metres) of the existing dwelling (or dwellings);
- volume calculations of the proposed replacement dwelling

The applicant will also be required to carry out a survey of any protected wildlife species which may be present in the existing building.

Where appropriate, a condition will be attached to any permission requiring the demolition of the existing property before any replacement is occupied.

The Council, where appropriate, will remove permitted development rights for extensions and outbuildings from replacement dwellings in the Green Belt.

Justification

NPPF paragraph 89 bullet point 3 allows for replacement dwellings in the Green Belt, providing the new dwelling is not 'materially larger' than the one it replaces.

The Council considers that a limit of 20% is appropriate in terms of the increase in volume of the replacement dwelling compared with the dwelling it replaces.

Any unused permitted development rights on the existing dwelling will not be taken into account in volume calculations; these are effectively 'forfeited' if a dwelling is replaced.

Regardless of the percentage limits for increases in volume, replacement dwellings will be judged on their impact on the openness of the Green Belt, their design, their siting within the plot and general location. It may be the case that a replacement dwelling is judged to have an unacceptable impact on the openness of the Green Belt compared with the existing dwelling, even if the above volume limits have not been breached. Conversely, there may be cases where the limits could be marginally exceeded if a replacement dwelling is particularly well-designed, in such a way that its impact on openness is minimised.

If the applicant proposes a replacement dwelling in a different location to the existing, it will be necessary to demonstrate that there is no increase in the overall visual impact of the building in the landscape. A scheme of remediation of the original house site will also be required and will be linked by condition or legal agreement to any replacement house.

The removal of permitted development rights for extensions and outbuildings from replacement dwellings in the Green Belt will prevent future additions that may cumulatively impact upon the openness of the Green Belt.

2.3 Conversion and replacement of non-residential buildings

There is a varied range of buildings located in the Green Belt which are no longer suitable for their original purposes. The majority are likely to be agricultural buildings but there may also be churches, chapels, schools, public houses, stables and others for which an alternative use may be sought.

Many of these buildings make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area. Provided they are structurally sound, conversion of these buildings, for example to employment or community use, visitor accommodation or housing can safeguard their future. By re-using existing resources, conversions can also meet the aims of sustainable built development.

Conversion of a building is considered to be development which would not lead to effective demolition and reconstruction of the building.

POLICY GB2 – CONVERSION OR REPLACEMENT OF NON-RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS IN THE GREEN BELT

1. Conversion of buildings

A proposal for the conversion of an existing non-residential building within the Green Belt must satisfy each of the following criteria:

- (a) The building must be of permanent and substantial construction and capable of conversion without major change or extension;
- (b) The proposals will maintain the character of the building, retaining essential features and detailing, as well as traditional forms and layouts;
- (c) The proposals will maintain and enhance the site features, and the character and wider landscape setting of the area;
- (d) The proposals will seek to improve the external appearance of the building, in line with the Borough Council's Design Guide SPD.

2. Replacement buildings

A proposal for the replacement of an existing non-residential building within the Green Belt with another non-residential building must satisfy each of the following criteria:

- (a) The existing building is lawful and permanent in nature;

- (b) The total volume of the replacement building should not be more than 20% larger than the volume of the building it replaces;
- (c) The replacement building should not materially harm the openness of the Green Belt through excessive scale or bulk or by virtue of its location. It should also be in keeping with the character of the area and appropriate in terms of design and materials.

The applicant must submit to the Council details of the existing and proposed buildings within a '*Green Belt Assessment*', which should include:

- full details of the volume calculations (in cubic metres) of the existing building(s);
- volume calculations of the proposed replacement building(s)

Where appropriate a condition will be attached to any permission requiring the demolition of the existing property before any replacement is brought into use.

For both conversions of buildings and replacement buildings, the applicant will be required to carry out a survey of any protected wildlife species which may be present in the existing building.

Justification

Conversions of buildings are permitted under NPPF paragraph 90, provided the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction.

In the case of traditional buildings, the proposal should retain essential features and detailing such as openings, walls and roofs as well as traditional forms and layouts

There are some buildings which may not be suitable for conversion, for example those which are structurally unsound, missing substantial sections of wall or roofs, ruined beyond recognition, eyesores which should be removed in the interests of landscape conservation, and / or buildings at risk of flooding. Conversion of non-residential buildings to housing should provide acceptable standards of accommodation in terms of room sizes and amenity.

The Council considers that a replacement building which is up to 20% larger than that which it replaces, may be appropriate in the Green Belt. Regardless of the percentage limits for increases in volume, replacement buildings will be judged on their impact on the openness of the Green Belt, their design, their siting within the plot and general location. It may be the case that a replacement building is judged to have an unacceptable impact on the openness of the Green Belt compared with the existing building, even if the above Policy GB2 volume limits have not been breached. Conversely, there may be cases where the limits could be marginally exceeded if a replacement building is particularly well-designed, in such a way that its impact on openness is minimised.

2.4 Vacant previously developed sites in the Green Belt

POLICY GB3 – REDEVELOPMENT OF VACANT PREVIOUSLY DEVELOPED SITES IN THE GREEN BELT

Proposals for the redevelopment of vacant previously developed sites within the Green Belt will be permitted provided the proposed development would not have a greater impact than the existing development on the openness of the Green Belt or on the purposes of including land within the Green Belt.

Justification

Policy GB3 is consistent with paragraph 89 of the NPPF.

When determining the impact of the proposed development upon the openness of the Green Belt, the Council would take into consideration a number of issues including:

- Previous buildings which may have occupied the site, including their size and layout
- How long ago the buildings occupied the site

2.5 Other considerations in relation to residential development on Brownfield land in the Green Belt

In the case of residential development on brownfield sites in the Green Belt, a proportion of the units should be affordable housing in accordance with WLLP **Policy RS2 (Affordable and Specialist Housing)** and **Policy AH1 (Affordable Housing Requirements)** of the Affordable Housing SPD 2015, if the Policy RS2 threshold for providing affordable housing has been exceeded.

For sites currently or most recently in employment or retail use (e.g. Use Classes A1, B1,B2, B8) or as agricultural/horticultural workers' dwellings, **Policy GN4 (Demonstrating Viability)** would need to be satisfied, unless such development were Permitted Development under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Amendment and Consequential Provisions) (England) Order 2014).

Policy RS5 (Accommodation for Temporary Agricultural/Horticultural Workers) permits the re-use of existing buildings within the Green Belt for accommodation for temporary agricultural and/or horticultural workers provided that it complies with other policies in the Local Plan and national planning policy. **Policy EC2 (The Rural Economy)** states that as a general approach, the re-use of existing buildings within rural areas will be supported where they would otherwise be left vacant. This conforms with paragraph 90 of the NPPF which sets out the re-use of buildings (providing they are of permanent and substantial construction) as an exception to inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

Where new dwellings are permitted in the Green Belt, the Council will reserve the right to remove permitted development rights for extensions and outbuildings in order to prevent future additions that cumulatively impact upon the openness of the Green Belt.

2.6 Alterations and Extensions to Buildings within the Green Belt

There is a substantial demand to extend dwellings within the Green Belt. Although house extensions can, in principle, be appropriate development within the Green Belt, large extensions can substantially change the original appearance of a rural building and can have a cumulative effect on the character of the Green Belt. The following policy therefore provides guidance on how the Council will assess proposals for extensions to buildings in the Green Belt.

POLICY GB4 - ALTERATIONS AND EXTENSIONS TO BUILDINGS WITHIN THE GREEN BELT

Proposals for an extension to an existing building within the Green Belt must satisfy each of the following criteria:

- (a) The existing building is lawful and permanent in nature;
- (b) The total volume of the proposal, together with any previous extensions, alterations and outbuildings, would not result in an increase of more than 40% above the volume of the original building (including, in the case of residential properties, any outbuildings or parts of outbuildings within 5m of the existing dwelling)
- (c) The design of the extension or alteration is in keeping with the original form and appearance of the building and does not materially harm the openness of the Green Belt through excessive scale or bulk, or by virtue of its location. It should also be in keeping with the character of the area and appropriate in terms of design and materials.

The applicant must provide clear evidence of what constitutes the original property and the volume of subsequent and proposed extensions within a '*Green Belt Assessment*' submitted to the Council, which should include:

- full details of the volume calculations (in cubic metres) of the 'original' property(-ies);
- volume calculations (in cubic metres) of any subsequent extensions; and
- volume calculations of the proposal.

The 'original building' is defined within the NPPF as the building as it existed on 1 July 1948 or, if constructed after 1 July 1948, as it was built originally.

The extension of an existing residential property within the Green Belt should not result in an increase in the residential curtilage.

The Council reserves the right to remove permitted development rights for further extensions and outbuildings to prevent future additions that cumulatively impact upon the openness of the Green Belt.

Justification

Extensions and alterations to buildings in the Green Belt are not considered in national or local planning policy to constitute inappropriate development, providing that any extension or alteration is not disproportionate and therefore, by definition, harmful to the openness of the Green Belt. Disproportionate development is defined in the NPPF as that which is 'materially larger' than the original building. The Council considers that any extension or alteration to a building within the Green Belt which exceeds 40% of the volume of the original building to be materially larger and therefore disproportionate.

This figure of 40% is provided as a guide only. There may be cases where an extension of less than this volume would be considered to have an unacceptable impact upon the openness of the Green Belt in certain locations. Figure 1 (a) and (b) overleaf illustrate examples of extensions of less than 50% of the size of the original property which, due to their form and projection from the original building, may be judged to have a negative impact upon openness. Figure 2 on the other hand, illustrates an extension of 50% of the original property. Due to its position in relation to the property, the impact of this form of extension upon the openness of the Green Belt would be substantially less than either Figure 1 (a) or (b).

Any additions to the building that have been constructed since the 'original' building date will be considered cumulatively and will be counted as part of the overall increase in size of the building when further new additions are being assessed. In the case of residential properties, this includes any building or structure erected as an enlargement of the dwelling for the purpose of additional domestic accommodation or for a purpose ancillary to the residential use of the dwelling. This approach is taken because small reductions in openness, repeated many times, can cumulatively have a material detrimental effect.

No development will be permitted in Green Belt areas which would result in the extension of domestic gardens as this is deemed to have a potential impact on openness.

Figures 1 & 2: Illustration of the impact of extensions upon the openness of the Green Belt

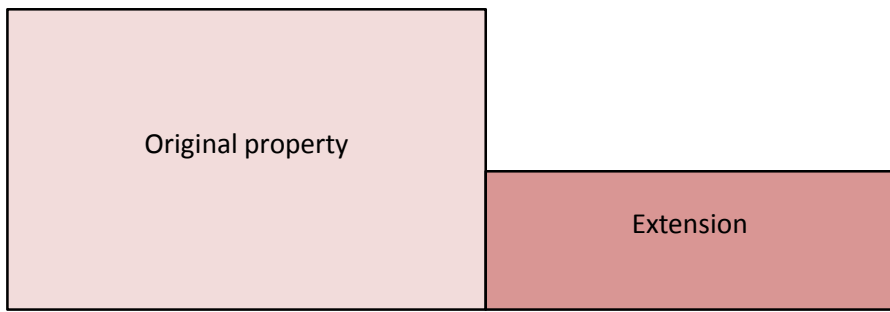


Figure 1 (a)

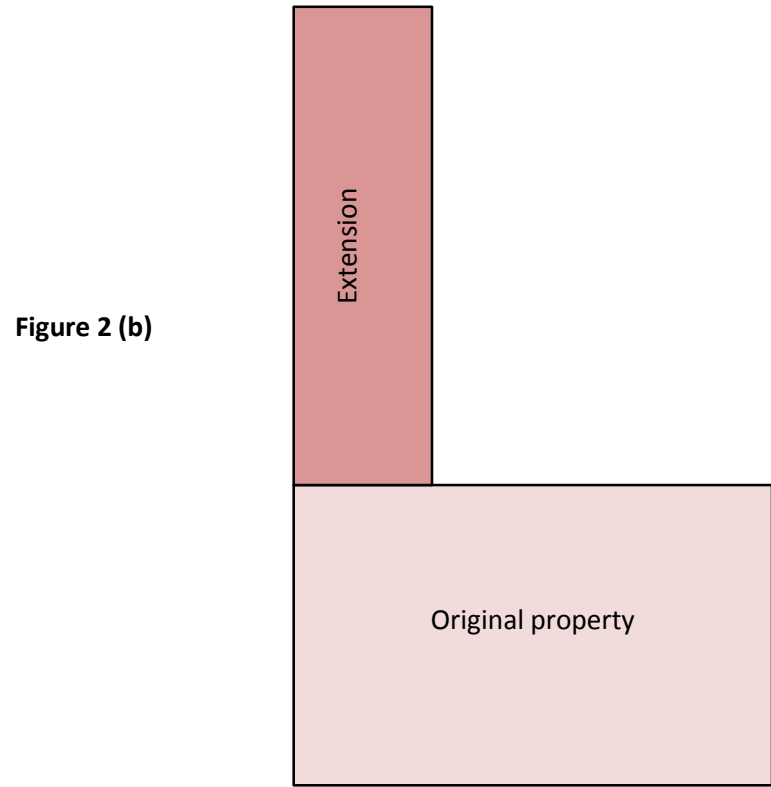


Figure 2 (b)

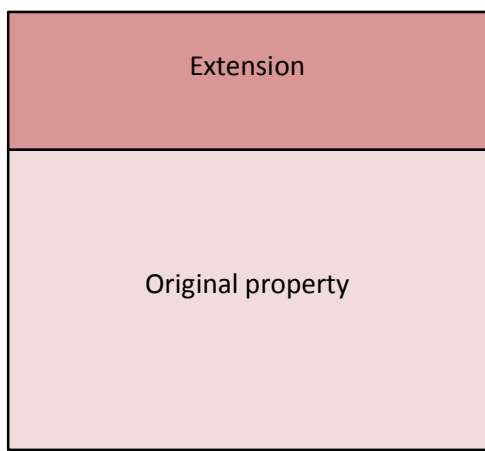


Figure 3

2.7 Stable Buildings in the Green Belt

The policy below concerns stables used for private recreational purposes only – commercial riding stables will be subject to different planning policies e.g. WLLP **Policy EC2** (The Rural Economy).

POLICY GB5 – STABLE BUILDINGS IN THE GREEN BELT

The number of stables should be appropriate to the intended use and should be kept as small as possible. Applicants should provide evidence to demonstrate the need for the stable building and to justify the amount of accommodation required.

New stables should meet the following criteria:

Design and scale

- Stables should normally comprise blocks of single stable depth, opening directly to the outside
- The building should have a maximum height to the roof ridge of 3.5m
- Each stable should have a maximum floor space of 14m²
- Tack rooms and hay stores should be of a similar size to that of an individual stable

Materials

Stables should be constructed from timber mounted on low brick plinths or with some limited courses of internal blockwork up to a height of 1.3m in order to protect timber walls from damage from the horses.

Siting

When siting stable buildings, the following guidelines should be followed:

- The stable building should not be in an open or prominent position and, if possible, should be close to existing buildings;
- The stable building should not require the construction of a long track in order to provide access; this may in itself constitute an engineering operation requiring planning permission;
- The stable building should, however, be an appropriate distance from the façade of any inhabited building, or of the boundary of any garden of any inhabited building not in the same ownership of the stable (to avoid nuisance from smell, noise, etc.); and
- The siting of the stable building should not have any adverse effect upon wildlife habitats, heritage assets or agricultural interests.

Areas of hardstanding

These areas associated with the stables should be the minimum size necessary for operation.

Landscaping and Boundary Treatments

Such screening should comprise a mixture of indigenous species of hedge and small trees appropriate to that particular rural setting. Details of landscaping and boundary treatments should be included in any application for a stable building.

Wildlife

Features such as nesting boxes within the eaves, or holes for birds or bats incorporated within stable buildings, will be encouraged.

Waste Disposal

Any applications for stable buildings should include details of drainage and methods for storage and disposal of manure.

Exceptions to these sizes and designs will only be accepted in very special circumstances.

Justification

There has been considerable growth in horse riding as a recreational pursuit in recent years. Demand has been stimulated by new facilities associated with farm holdings and by the selling off of individual fields or paddocks. Stable blocks on open, undeveloped land can appear isolated and intrusive and, once established, can lead to the intensification of uses on the site. The objective of this policy is to ensure that new stables are only permitted in locations which are not damaging to the character and appearance of the countryside.

Stables generally tend to be required for relatively short periods of time, with needs varying according to change of ownership or occupation of land or associated dwellings. On this basis, the Council considers it inappropriate that the stables should be constructed of permanent materials such as brick or stone. This may result in them remaining on the site long after they are needed and lead to a proliferation of brick and stone buildings across the countryside, to the detriment of the character and openness of the Green Belt. Instead, materials should help to reduce the impact of such buildings on the character and openness of the Green Belt.

The impact of these buildings can also be reduced by minimising the amount of hardstanding permitted around the stable buildings, in order to prevent the encroachment of development into the open countryside. Stable buildings and hardstanding areas can, if necessary, be screened by vegetation to further reduce their impact on the landscape.