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4<sup>th</sup> April 2018

Strategic Planning,  
City of York Council,  
West Offices,  
Station Rise,  
YORK  
YO1 6GA



Dear City of York Council,

**City of York Publication Draft Local Plan Consultation**

I enclose a 16GB Memory Stick which contains my Response to the Consultation (1-40 pages) with Appendices attached (40-115 pages) and five supporting Annexes of evidential material (page numbers 120 - 744 plus Annexe 5 containing plans).

The topics addressed in this Response are:

- Policy SS2 and the Green Belt Designations
- Section 8 – as a whole
- Section 10 – as a whole
- On various land allocations including ST2, ST7, ST 9, ST 14, ST 15 and ST 35.



**CITY OF YORK LOCAL PLAN  
PUBLICATION DRAFT 2018**

**RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION 04.04.2018**

**BY**

**GEORGE E WRIGHT MA MRTPI**

**IN RESPECT OF  
GREEN BELT POLICY & PROPOSALS  
&  
CONSEQUENTIAL DEVELOPMENT LAND ALLOCATIONS  
&  
HERITAGE POLICY**

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## PREFACE

Having been engaged in the planning process for 56 years, practicing either as a solicitor or (in the last 17 years) as a Chartered Town Planner, I have extensive experience of involvement in the Plan-making process. However, in the past I have always had that involvement based on instructions from a client and my involvement has been to promote a specific interest in the outcome. Whilst I do not consider I have ever presented a case which I regard as not being based on a sound professional foundation, free from bias or deliberately withheld evidence, I appreciate that the involvement has been from a limited perspective.

In preparing this submission, I have not acted for any client but am motivated to undertake the work at my personal expense and in my personal time. I do so primarily for two reasons:

- That my past involvement led me to believe that this Local Plan is predicated on a false premise and is fundamentally flawed, and
- In those circumstances I feel a sense of responsibility to the wider community within which I lived and a sense of duty to place my accumulated knowledge and experience to benefit what I consider a most important issue, the appropriate resolution of a green belt for the historic City of York.

I made a pledge to myself at the outset of this task, that should I accept any instructions to act for a client in this process, I would identify any additional text or removal or alteration of any text to highlight the fact it was written following the acceptance of such instructions.

For the sake of completeness, I set out my relevant experience at Appendix 8, though the most significant aspect of that was my involvement in the Green Belt Round Table process related to the 1998 Local Plan and my involvement (jointly with two other senior locally-based Chartered Town Planners), in establishing a policy to preserve the York Green Belt in the RSS process in 2007. That intervention resulted in the current policy which establishes the general extent of the York Green Belt through the RSS process, a policy which would not exist had the approach of the Regional Planning Body and the City of York Council prevailed.

**George E Wright MA MRTPI**

April 2018

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## CHAPTER 1 – THE FRAMEWORK OF THE RESPONSE

### 1.1.0 Overview.

1.1.1 This submission is in the form of an objection to the City of York Publication Draft Local Plan (PDLP) both as a whole and also to specific policies including the policy and designations relating to the York green Belt (YGB). This submission, which is hereinafter referred to as the Response, is submitted in three elements, namely:

- The main objection, identified as *the Response*, which is set out in Chapters preceded by a Preface.
- Appendices, numbered 1 to 8 which review and analyse background material from which the Response then draws the conclusions which underpin the Chapters.
- Annexes, numbered I to V (roman numerals), which contain published and other material considered to be appropriate to the evidence base of both the PDLP and/or also this Response.

1.1.2 The Response takes the form of a broad ranging objection to the Green Belt designations and policies proposed. The overall conclusion of this Response, taken as a whole, is that the PDLP is fundamentally unsound and unfit for purpose.

1.1.3 The Response then addresses the type and nature of policies which the PDLP omits but should properly contain.

1.1.4 The Response relates these objections to other policies in the PDLP, particularly those relating to development land allocations.

1.1.5 Finally, In Chapter 6, the Response sets out a summary of the objections, their justification and underpinning reasons for the conclusion that the PDLP and/or individual policies are unsound.

1.1.6 Within the Response, the issue of how those objections might be addressed is considered in relation to soundness with regard to the following criteria: -

- compliance with the legal and regulatory framework for Local Plans,
- the assessment of the PDLP being positively prepared,
- the assessment of the PDLP being positively justified,
- the assessment of the PDLP being positively effective,
- the assessment of the PDLP being positively consistent with national policy.

## 1.2.0 Navigation of the Response.

1.2.1 The Response is indexed in the three main sections:

- the principal response containing a Preface, Index of Contents and the Response set out in 6 Chapters,
- The Appendices review specific underlying issues or events, analyse and appraise them leading to conclusions upon which the Response rests, and
- The Annexes contain copies of documents or extracts from documents, maps and plans which have been previously published that constitute an evidence base for the reviews and analysis of the Appendices. There is some original material in Annexe V.

1.2.2 The Response is set out in chapters. The chapters contain sections, and the sections, paragraphs. The pages are numbered sequentially and that page numbering progresses through the Appendices and Annexes with the exception Annexe V which is only tabbed.

1.2.3 In the Response, the paragraph numbers denote – firstly, the chapter, secondly, the section of the chapter and thirdly the paragraph within the section. The overall number is the unique number of the particular paragraph. For example, 2.2.1 as a paragraph number indicates it is in Chapter 2, Section 2 of that chapter and the second paragraph in the section. The first paragraph number in this section would be 2.2.0. The ‘0’ paragraph number is a heading for the section. For the purpose of cross-referencing, the reference is to the full numbered paragraph in the Response – e.g. 2.2.1.

1.2.4 The Appendices are numbered in sections and paragraphs but are cross-referenced by the prefix ‘**Ap**’ followed by the appendix number. Thus, a reference to the second paragraph of section 2 of Appendix 1, is indicated as **Ap1.2.1**. Again, the headings of sections are numbered as paragraph number ‘0’.

1.2.5 The Annexes are numbered by capital Roman numerals and each Annexe is subdivided into sections, which bear lower case Roman numerals. In hard copy the sections are tabbed. The pages of the Annexes are sequentially numbered following on from the page numbers of the Response and then the Appendices. So, a cross-reference to an Annex is prefixed with ‘**Ax**’ and then the Annex number followed by the page numbers e.g. **Ax1i page ##** is a reference to Annexe 1, Section 1 (which is Circular 14/84) followed by the sequential page number within the total submission.

### 1.3.0 The Appendices

- 1.3.1 The Appendices comprise in respect of those numbered 1-5 a review of a particular issues which has relevance to understanding the policies and proposals either actually set out in the PDLP or which it should contain.
- 1.3.2 A significant part of the background to the Response is a review of historic events. This review then leads to an analysis and appraisal of those events. The analysis has the purpose of identifying what in those processes is relevant to this process and what is unsound, unreliable or irrelevant to it.
- 1.3.3 A by-product of this analysis is that the LPA's approach appears to be formulated under the influence of '*confirmation bias*'. That issue is addressed and explained at Appendix 8.
- 1.3.4 A great deal of the material reviewed in the Appendices, particularly Appendices 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5, is of historical events that are related to the York Green Belt (YGB) policy process. In other circumstances, the historical record of planning policy may have interest, but little or no relevance to current policy formulation. Because National Green Belt policy has been relatively consistent, when compared to other public planning policies, the historical circumstances do have a prima facie value. They also serve to explain the baselines that have been adopted in the evolution of the process of the PDLP and to evaluate past outcomes upon which the PDLP has sought to rely, rebut or ignore.
- 1.3.5 It is submitted that the analysis and conclusions that arise from those reviews of the historic development both of Green Belt policy and its application to the YGB have important outcomes for the current planning making process.
- 1.3.6 This approach has, however, to be undertaken with a degree of caution because there have been changes in National Green Belt policy over time that has impacts on outcomes as they now relate to the issues for this process. There have also been changes in the planning regulatory framework which also have impacts on those outcomes and their current relevance.
- 1.3.7 As examples of such policy changes:
- the purposes of green belt policy have developed between 1955 and today but until 2008 the specific purpose of the YGB was not defined in policy,

- the declared intention of green belt policy prior to 1995 did not include the promotion of sustainable patterns of development, as is now the case.

1.3.8 Accordingly, the approach taken in the Appendices addressing historical events and circumstances is, firstly, to identify the issue which may be relevant and then to consider these in light of their circumstances and the evolution of circumstances. By this process it is sought to identify *'the lessons of history'* and evaluate them in respect of context of this plan process. The bibliography at Appendix 8 demonstrates the range of material assessed in addition to that set out in the Annexes. However, this Response does not seek to provide a simple chronology of events but rather to identify the events of relevance.

1.3.9 Within each Appendix is set out *Assessments* and *Conclusions*. These two categories both represent conclusions drawn from the reviewed evidence but each has regard to a recognised test of evidential value. In the case of the *Assessments*, the conclusion is drawn on a balance of probabilities and in the case of the *Conclusions*, the matter is considered as beyond all reasonable doubt.

#### **1.4.0 Acronyms & Glossary**

1.4.1 At Appendix 8, Section 2, is set out a list of acronyms and a glossary of terms used in the response.

1.4.2 The acronyms are listed in alphabetical order.

1.4.3 Whilst Appendix 8 sets out a full list of anacronyms and a glossary of terms used in this Response, the specific terms *'Primary and Secondary Policy'* are also defined and explained below as their use is important to the understanding of this Response.

1.4.4 *Primary Policy* is an expression intended to cover policy which has been adopted to establish the general extent of a Green Belt. It is used to cover that which has previously existed and that which is current according to the context. This type of policy in respect of a Green Belt was usually established in a Structure Plan and in respect of the YGB it was first established in the North Yorkshire County Structure Plan adopted 1980 (NYCSP 1980). The current Primary Policy is set out in the Statutory Instrument 2013 No. 117 Town & Country Planning England – The Regional Strategy for Yorkshire and the Humber (Partial Revocation) Order 2013. **(Ax II ix)**. This document forms part of the development plan for the City of York and is referred to as the RSS Revocation Order.

1.4.5 *Secondary Policy* for Green Belt is that which is set out or should be set out in the Local Plan and its Proposal Map(s). This policy has to be in general conformity with the Primary Policy and consistent with the National Policy of the NPPF. It would normally address outer and inner boundaries, the status of settlements, the boundaries of inset settlements and safeguarded land.

### **1.5.0 The Maps**

1.5.1 The various Maps referred to in this Response are set out in Annexe 5.

1.5.2 By way of general explanation of the purposes of these Maps in relation to the Response, is set out a summary below:

#### **YGBLP Consultation Draft Proposal Plans (2 sheets) Annexe V i.**

These plans were used in the consultation process after the 1991 Green Belt Local Plan to indicate the 6-mile radius perimeter of the Primary Policy but also show areas of sketch plan Green Belt, areas to be added or removed. It is unclear as why the unapproved sketch plan areas had any relevance to the establishing of the boundaries of a Green Belt under Policy E8 of the NYCSP but as is explained in the Response, they did.

#### **GYA Study Map. Annexe V ii.**

This is undated and untitled but is believed to have been produced by NYCC for the GYS. It refers to the 'adopted centre' but where or when it was 'adopted' and by whom has not been traced.

#### **The YGBLP 1991 Proposals Map (4 Sheets) Annexe V iii.**

These show the 1991 proposals for the inner and outer boundaries. This Response espouses that these boundaries are substantially the same as used for the 1998 CoYLP and the PDLP Proposals Maps. It is for this reason the history is important.

#### **The Strays (4 A4 Sheets). Annexe V iv.**

These Maps define the extent of the Strays. These are in essence limited areas within the urban core.

#### **NYCSP Key Diagram (A3 Sheet) Annexe V v.**

This shows the general extent around the urban core but within the outer ring road.

#### **CoYLP Proposal Maps (2 Sheets) Annexe V vi.**

These show a similar inner boundary approach to the YGBLP proposals and similar outer boundaries except where limited to the District geographical area.

**RPG15 – Key Diagram Annexe V viii**

This shows the general extent in line with the 1991 Proposals.

**Inset Settlement Maps Annexe V viii**

These are produced as examples of the level of detail that is necessary for subsequent development control purposes. Not provided by the PDLP.

**RSS Key Diagram Annexe V ix**

This shows the inner boundary of the general extent beyond the urban core and quite distinct from the approach in RPG15 2001 or the 1991 Proposals Maps.

**Response Plan - Key Diagram Annexe V x**

This is the PDLP Key Diagram which has a 6-mile radius and a 3.34-mile radii superimposed.

**Response Plan – York Urban Growth Pattern 1853 and also by various dates (2 sheets) Annexe V xi**

These Plans are prepared for this Response for the purpose of identifying the historic pattern to urban growth at York. It shows how York has expanded outwards to absorb adjacent settlements – Acomb, Dringhouses, Fulford, Heslington, Osbaldwick, Heworth and Clifton over the past 150 years.

**OS 1:20000 York area with 6 and 3.34-mile radius (Annexe V xii)**

This drawing enables potential boundary features adjacent to the radius to be identified.

**York Corine Land Cover (Annexe V xiii)**

This is a Map of York which indicates the nature and form of land uses. It is produced by Sheffield University and is part of a National Project. The Corine Project is a land use data base launched by the EU in 1985.

**PDLP Key Diagram with general locations for development marked (Annexe V iv)**

The cross-hatch areas are those which in this submission are most sustainable areas for growth i.e. on major transport routes and hatched are areas for development or safeguarding. This is a broad brush indicative assessment only to display that there is a reasonably alternative approach to the distribution of growth that would be significantly more sustainable.

### **1.6.0 Critical Issue of this Response.**

1.6.1 The Response addresses the process by which the concept of a Green Belt around York developed following the publication of Circular 42/55. This approach was found to be necessary as errors and misconceptions have occurred historically that have been carried forward in the PDLP. In some cases, the errors and misconceptions have been compounded over this timeframe.

1.6.2 This Response is an objection to the fundamental soundness of the PDLP both in its basis and consequential outcomes. That objection rests on the premise that the PDLP fails to address the needs for Secondary Policy for the YGB to conform with the Primary Policy set out in the RSS Revocation Order and to be consistent with the National Policy set out in the NPPF. These knock-on consequences, in particular that of the allocation of land to meet development needs, does not achieve a sustainable pattern, as would be the case if the Green Belt designation had been addressed properly. This also has longer term adverse implications for the permanence of the YGB.

1.6.3 In summary the designation of the Green Belt through the resolution of the boundaries and other Secondary Policy to be contained in the PDLP gives rise to the following considerations:

- The formulation of the boundaries is the single most important decision to be made through the PDLP.
- This decision will have profound implications for the City, which will potentially impact upon its character and quality for generations to come.
- The approach of the LPA is fundamentally misconceived in that the proposals are in essence those of the 1991 YGBLP and/or the 1998 CoYLP. Both of these Plans are analysed in this Response and demonstrably shown to be unsound in terms of the current policy framework.
- The PDLP when assessed against this framework is not positively prepared, not justified, not effective and not consistent with the NPPF.

1.6.4 These shortcomings have serious implications for the whole Plan and in particular to the allocation of land for development and the opportunity to provide safeguarded land to ensure the permanence of the YGB.

- 1.6.5 Just as the 1998 CoYLP was unsound and could not be rectified even by a number and significant scale of *'in course of Inquiry changes'* made over a four-year period, this PDLP is so fundamentally unsound that modifications will not address the inadequacy of the proposals.
- 1.6.6 The requested outcome of this objection is for the Plan Inspector to take the prompt decision to reject the Plan as unfit for purpose at the outset. However, the LPA need to recognise the shortcomings to be able to proceed to a successful outcome in the future.
- 1.6.7 The Response identifies long established misconceptions which on occasions have become compounded with the passage of time. The origins of the erroneous concepts and proposals date back over a period of 40 years. Many of the issues have their roots in detail and so the Response has been structured with the intention that whilst the detail is addressed carefully and supported by evidential material the important issues are not thereby lost in the extent of that work.
- 1.6.8 The key elements arise within the process that first attempted to establish the general extent of the YGB through the NYCSP 1980 and then the Secondary policy through firstly the 1991 YGBLP and then the 1998 CoYLP. Finally there was the near tragedy of the RSS process where The Regional Planning Board and the CoYC failed to promote a replacement policy to preserve the general extent and Primary Policy. These events are reviewed and analysed in Appendices to this Response in an attempt to separate the detail from the main principles.
- 1.6.9 Although the Response primarily addresses the issues that conclude the PDLP is fundamentally flawed. Through a detailed analysis of historical events, the issue can also be assessed on the face of the published material. The PDLP is not based on proportionate evidence. The evidence is not adequate to address the designations as concluded on the Proposals Maps. The PDLP fails to set out reasoned justification based on evidence that lead to the conclusions which determine the location of the boundaries and the status of settlements within the YGB. The 2003 evidence was prepared to justify proposals for in course of Inquiry changes when neither the purpose as now stated in the Primary Policy existed or the framework which the RSS Policy provides existed. At all times was the change to support sustainable patterns of development ignored and no changes were proposed to expressly address that requirement.
- 1.7.0 The Form & Content of this Response.**

- 1.7.1 One of the material changes that occurs over the timeframe is the structure of local government and the framework of Local Planning Authorities within that structure. To this extent reference is made to the '*Greater York Area*' sometimes referred to in publications as the Greater York Study Area (GYS). The relevance of this expression is that it relates to an area which was intended to be marginally larger than the general extent of the YGB. Between 1955 and 1996 the perceived YGB was geographically larger by some measure than the former County Borough of York (to 1974) or the York City Council (to 1996). The YGB in its present status goes beyond the geographic area of the District of the City of York Council (CoYC) and currently has designated areas in Hambleton, Ryedale, Selby and Harrogate. This fact presents a separate issue but one which in this submission is considered a matter to be addressed through, if not necessarily resolved by, this Local Plan process. That issue is considered to be a discrete one but nevertheless important.
- 1.7.2 Chapter 2 addresses the objection as it relates to the Green Belt designations policy set out in Section 3 at Policy SS2 in the PDLP or absent from it as the case may be. This Chapter however depends on an understanding of historic events and the lessons they provide. This is covered by the Appendices 1 to 5 and each Appendix in turn rests upon material set out in Annexes. Plans and Maps have been placed in a separate Annex as the weight of transmitting these electronically is likely to be problematic.
- 1.7.3 Chapter 3 addresses the evidence base in respect of Green Belt policy and designations related to Policy SS2 upon which the LPA claim the plan is based and the evidence base which in this submission would be necessary to establish appropriate Secondary Policy.
- 1.7.4 Chapter 4 addresses Policies set out in the PDLP at Section 10 and specific development land allocations which are considered to be unsound in consequence of the arguments supporting the objection to the designations of the YGB and its boundaries under Chapter 3 above in relation to PDLP Policy SS2
- 1.7.5 Chapter 5 addresses an objection in relation to Section 8 of the PDLP.
- 1.7.6 Chapter 6 summarises the objections overall and relates them to the tests of soundness.

## CHAPTER 2 - THE GREEN BELT POLICY OF THE PDLP

### 2.1.0 Overview.

- 2.1.1 The PDLP is required to deliver Secondary Policy in respect of the YGB.
- 2.1.2 The Secondary Policy has to be in conformity with the Primary Policy.
- 2.1.3 Both the Primary Policy and the Secondary Policy have to be consistent with the National Policy as set out in the NPPF, which includes the policy being evidenced based.
- 2.1.4 The Primary Policy is set out in the Regional Strategy for Yorkshire and the Humber (Partial Revocation) Order 2013 (**Annexe II xi page 373**) which has to be read in conjunction with the Key Diagram of the RSS adopted May 2008 (**Annexe V ix**).
- 2.1.5 National Policy in respect of plan-making in relation to establishing Secondary Policy is set out in paragraphs 81-86 of the NPPF.
- 2.1.6 This Chapter will consider the policy issues as they relate to the component parts of Secondary Policy namely, the Purpose of the YGB, the resolution of the outer boundary, the resolution of the inner boundary, the resolution of the status of settlements within the YGB, inset settlement boundaries and safeguarded land.
- 2.1.7 Because the PDLP extends the proposals for Green Belt into the urban core a further section headed Green Wedges is also considered in this Chapter.
- 2.1.8 The general extent of the YGB is a radius of 6-miles from the City Centre This Response has to assume what is the central point of the City from which that radius is identified. Neither the Primary Policy or the PDLP define that point. In relation to a previous iteration of Secondary Policy, the centre of York was deemed to be the central tower of York Minster, the external radius was the same. The PDLP does not define the centre of York either in the text or in the evidence base. This is an essential requirement to enable the location of the outer boundary to be properly delineated and justified.
- 2.1.9 From the analysis at Appendices 1-5, it is concluded that the area of the general extent can be legitimately defined as being 20,234 ha or 50,000 acres. That would then give rise to an outcome in respect of the inner boundary that it was 3.34 miles from the centre of York on average. Such a proposition would produce a ring around

the City of a Green Belt 2.66 miles wide. That form of a Green Belt is consistent with the Key Diagram of the RSS and is shown on the Plan at **Annexe V xii**.

2.1.10 Such a width (2.66 miles) for the YGB is in line with many other Green Belts and as stated as Table 6.1 of the Report on Strategic Gaps (**Annexe I vii page 287**) a minimum distance of at least 2 miles is appropriate for a Strategic Gap having the purpose of avoidance of coalescence and preserving the setting of an urban area. (My emphasis).

2.1.11 The Strategic Gaps Report also notes at Table 6.3 that Green Wedges which protect important open land to help shape growth of towns and cities and protect good quality environmental assets and penetrating into towns may be up-to a mile wide (My emphasis). The Report also states Green Wedge policy is the appropriate policy format for such areas rather than Green Belt policy. There is no indication that the LPA have considered this alternative approach.

## **2.2.0 The baseline analysis.**

2.2.1 The baseline evidence and analysis which underpins this Chapter is that set out at Appendices 1 to 5.

2.2.2 Each Appendix addresses a specific topic, reviews relevant material, analyses it and then draws conclusions.

2.2.3 The conclusions of the Appendices are not repeated in the text of this Chapter but the conclusions of the Chapter are based upon the conclusions drawn in the Appendices as well as the text of the Chapter. It is therefore necessary as a preliminary process to consider the material addressed in those relevant Appendices.

## **2.3.0 Green Belt policy required in the PDLP**

2.3.1 It is the submission of this Response that the establishment of Secondary Policy for the YGB is an essential component of the PDLP and that the resolution of the inner boundary is the most crucial decision of the PDLP process. In resolving such policies the Primary Policy has to be conformed with and that requires the PDLP to establish certain elements of Secondary Policy such as the outer and inner boundaries. However, circumstances also require other policies to be established. Previous iterations of Primary Policy set out guidance on inset settlements and their boundaries but the circumstances of the creation of the RSS policy most probably

explains the omission which exists in the current Primary Policy. Nevertheless policy is required in the PDLP and that needs to emanate from an evidence base.

### 2.3.2 The requirements of the Secondary Policy are :

- The Outer Boundary in so far as it is within the District. Because the outer boundary will also be within other adjacent Districts (Hambleton, Ryedale, Selby and Harrogate), it is the submission of this Response that this policy is strategic and should be addressed through the duty to co-operate. In light of the historic stance of MHLG and SoS it should most preferredly be addressed through a Statement of Common Ground as to the overall detailed proposals for the YGB and the boudary show non the Key Diagram.
- The inner boundary. The evidence base needs to relate to the requirements of Policy YH9 of the RSS Revocation Order, which sets out criteria for establishing the inner boundary.
- The status of settlements within the YGB as to whether they should allow no new building (washed over), allow infill only or will accommodate limit development or infill. This process would require a specific evidence base and policies which flowed from that evidence to Justify the status attributed to each settlement. Policies for controlling development within inset settlements are not Green Belt related policy and should be addressed elsewhere and separately in the PDLP.
- The definition of inset settlement boundaries. This procees would again be support by some evidenced based rarionale as to how the boundaries have been defined in the process and supported by adequate plans which will facilitate subsequent development control decisions.
- The identification of safeguarded land. The PDLP should be supported by some evidence to indicate how this would ensure the permanence of the YGB and include policies to safeguard the land against development during the Plan period.
- Policies to protect green space which penertrated into the urban core and up to the inner boundary if necessary, as Green Belt policy has been held to be inappropriate for these purposes.

### 2.4.0 Green Belt policy of the PDLP.

- 2.4.1 The detailed policy provisions of the PDLP are reviewed and analysed below with regard to the specific aspects/issues identified under the bullet points at para. 2.3.2 above but here a broad statement of the proposed policies is considered.
- 2.4.2 It is apparent that there are two specific sets of Green Belt policy in the PDLP, that is Policy SS2 which is headed '*The Role of the Green Belt*' and a Chapter which relates to development control, comprising Policies GB1 to GB4.
- 2.4.3 Thus it appears that Policy SS2 addresses all the issues of policy relating to Secondary Policy as described at 2.3.2. This Policy has to be read in conjunction with the Proposals Maps which do in that form prescribe the area within the District to be regarded as forming a part of the YGB and the boundaries to the inset settlements.
- 2.4.4 How this is supported by evidence is considered in the next Chapter but in terms of Policy and justification, at face value the PDLP and its evidence base appear to fall woefully short of what is required or necessary. The specific issues arising are considered under the headings below.

## **2.5.0 The Purpose of the YGB**

- 2.5.1 There is a single purpose attributed by the Primary Policy, which is at para. Y1 C 2 of the Schedule to the RSS Revocation Order. This states:

***[To] protect and enhance the nationally significant historical and environmental character of York, including its historic setting, views of the Minster and important open areas.***

- 2.5.2 The purpose set out at Policy YH9C of the RSS Revocation Order is one solely related to the definition of the inner boundary. It is not the purpose of the YGB it is guidance for setting the inner boundary.
- 2.5.3 The purpose for the Green Belt set out in the PDLP is stated to be:
- at para 1.49 the overall purpose of York's GB is to '*preserve the setting and special character of York and also helping to deliver the other purposes.*'
  - At para 1.50 it refers to the policy at YH9C but attributes this to the outer boundary as well as the inner boundary

- at para 2.10 *'The Primary function of YGB, will be to preserve its setting and special character.'* That is a purpose set out at para 80 of the NPPF not the wording used in the Revocation Order. The word *'function'*, if it is intended to refer to the purpose of the YGB, should describe it as *'the function'* or *'the sole function'*. That is to say the word *'Primary'* is inappropriate and misleading as it suggests more than one purpose for the YGB.
- Policy SS2: The Role of York's Green Belt. This refers to a *primary purpose* rather than a sole purpose and then refers to a purpose set out at para 80 of the NPPF not that prescribed at Y1. C.2 of the Revocation Order.
- Para. 3.13 describes the *'prime purpose'* with reference to the drawing at Figure 3.1. That indicates areas for retaining the rural setting and areas preventing coalescence and village settings. Again this is not the purpose set out in the Revocation Order and the Primary Policy only has a single purpose.

2.5.4 It is apparent from these references that:

- the PDLP does not set out the single purpose as contained at para. Y1. C.2 in any part of its text. That must give rise to concern.
- the use of the expression *'primary purpose'* suggests that the Primary Policy sets out additional purposes such as protecting the setting of the villages and preventing coalesce with villages. Accordingly, para 1.49, 2.10 & 3.13 are incorrect and belie an approach which conflicts with the Primary Policy. These particular concerns are addressed more fully in the next Chapter when considering the PDLP's evidence base.
- The relating of the policy purpose of YH9C to the outer boundary is without foundation. Accordingly, para 1.50 of the PDLP is incorrect.
- As to Policy SS.2 of the PDLP, the wording should be amended by deleting *'primary'* and inserting sole. This should be followed by the wording as set out at Y1.C.2 of the RSS Revocation Order. The general extent of the YGB goes beyond the District boundary and so the second paragraph is incorrect. The Key Diagram should be amended to show the full extent of the YGB. Realistically the duration of the Green Belt has to be indefinite because the 3.34 mile radius represents the ultimate limit of growth without revising not just the boundaries but the Primary Policy.

2.5.5 Two conclusions can be drawn from this review of the PDLP's reference to the purpose of the YGB. No justification is given for that departure from the Primary Policy but :

- The PDLP fails to state the sole purpose of the YGB correctly and indicates that it has taken into account purposes not within the terms of the Primary Policy.
- That there is inadequate information to understand how the Proposals to define the boundaries have been arrived at or that different factors have related to the delineation of the outer boundaries as opposed to the inner boundaries that would have to satisfy the requirements of policy YH9C.

2.5.6 The reference to Figure 3.1 is to plans and an evidence base drawn up in 2003. That is to say before National Policy was set out in its current terms and 10 years before the Primary Policy was defined in precise detail and 5 years before the purpose of the YGB it was defined at all. This is not a credible basis for the definition of the historic character and setting in the terms of policy Y1. C.2. There is no attempt to define the national significant elements. The evidence base would at minimum require a definition of those features that constitute the nationally significant historical and environmental character; the historic setting; the appropriate viewpoints of views of the Minster; and a definition of the important open areas. Such evidence would lead to a robust and credible evidence base necessary for the PDLP to define what matters the YGB had to protect and enhance and therefore where the boundaries needed to be.

## **2.6.0 The Outer Boundary**

2.6.1 The starting point would be to provide a map/plan which indicated the actual outer boundary of the whole of the YGB. This would indicate that some elements of what the current Proposal Map shows as the outer boundary are only the District boundary and that the YGB outer boundary goes beyond and is within neighbouring Districts. An interpretation of the PDLP as it stands is that the YGB is limited to the District only.

2.6.2 The outer boundary is a strategic matter for the cross-border cooperation. It would need to set out how the authorities involved had resolve the outer boundary based at a 6-mile radius. It is the position of the Response that the adjacent authorities based this outer boundary line on the 1991 Plan not a 6-mile radius. That fact would become apparent by the Key Diagram showing both the whole outer boundary as it

is now prescribed and a 6-mile radius line. This plan process needs to be the catalyst to address those errors and the cross-border dialogue needs to demonstrate that fact.

- 2.6.3 The PDLP needs to deduce exceptional circumstances for extending the general extent beyond the 6-miles in all cases where a definable boundary could be identified at or about 6-miles. That at least would place Wheldrake, if not Escrick, outside the YGB.
- 2.6.4 The outer boundary proposed is not based on the Primary Policy but the proposals of the 1998 CoYLP and 1991 YGBLP both of which were unsound. For example, the inclusion of Wheldrake as an inset settlement was promoted in the 1991 Plan for the purpose of constraining development pressures in a rural area. The SoS had previously stated that approach was not appropriate, when he defined in the outer boundary at a 6-mile radius. The SoS stated that using Green Belt Policy for such a purpose would undermine Green Belt policy nationally (My emphasis of the SoS statement). The PDLP proposals have that effect and are not only unsound but also positively harmful at a National level.

### **2.7.0 Inner Boundary**

- 2.7.1 It is apparent the PDLP is predicated on a tightly drawn inner boundary and probably based on the 1991 or 1998 Local Plan Proposals. However, there is no evidence base to justify the proposals at all.
- 2.7.2 The justification for the inner boundary being tight, adopted in the approach to the 1991 and 1998 Plans, was misconceived and not evidence based. The proposals for a new settlement beyond the YGB was a reason in 1991 but did not apply in 1998. The change of Green Belt Policy between those dates, in the form of PPG2 1995, should have generated a complete rethinking of the proposals, but it did not.
- 2.7.3 The Key Diagram indicates the inner boundary is not tightly drawn and the description of the York Green Belt in the Booklet *The Green Belts 1988* (**Annexe I iii page #**) also indicates it does not need to be tightly drawn. The Booklet also indicates there was no obviously identifiable limit to the expansion of the urban core. That position was distinctly different from the positions at Oxford and Cambridge.
- 2.7.4 The NPPF sets out at para. 84 an appropriate approach. This has not been taken up as is witnessed by the allocations ST15 and ST9.

- 2.7.5 There is no evidence base which appropriately addresses the framework and options available. No alternative approach appears to have been considered in the PDL process such as a looser inner boundary. No explanation is given for the area of Green Belt now proposed and no consideration appears to have been given to the area of the YGB prescribed in PPG2 1988. That area must carry significant weight because it is the only assessment of the area of the YGB made before subsequent statistics were solely based on the outcome of the unsound 1991 YGBLP proposals.
- 2.7.6 The approach in the Plan is unsound and without evidential justification.
- 2.7.7 It is unnecessary for the inner boundaries to encompass the Strays and any Green Wedges leading out to or towards the inner boundaries. These matters could be addressed by Green Wedge policy. That might in any event be more protective than Green Belt policy. The proposals would require an appropriate evidence relating to the need and purpose of the open land within the inner boundary to be so protected. Whilst it seems probable that such a case could be made soundly, the presentation of the PDL and its evidence base fail to address these issues or even refer to them as a reasonable alternative approach.

#### **2.8.0 The Settlements**

- 2.8.1 This section addresses both the status of settlements and their inset boundaries where that is applicable. There does not appear to be any justification in the PDL or evidence base to address these issues. The Proposal Plans merely demonstrate which settlements are inset but the Proposal Maps are hardly at a suitable scale for subsequent development control purposes. In both previous processes in 1991 and 1998 a set of inset boundary maps was also provided.
- 2.8.2 There is no justification for a policy to prevent coalescence between the urban core and the nearer outlying settlements. To do so would be contrary to policy in para 84 NPPF. It was not even appropriate policy under the former Primary Policy which sought only to prevent coalescence between the outlying settlements themselves. This matter has specific relevance to the proposed allocations ST9 and ST35. As is dealt with at the next Chapter the evidence base is also entirely inadequate to constitute a basis for this approach.
- 2.8.3 The Plans at **Annexe V x** indicate the historic pattern of growth. This process has been the progressive and historical coalescence with the closest outlying settlements such as Heworth, Clifton and Acomb. This form of expansion is in accordance with the historic character. The settlements which should be regarded as directions for expansion from the urban core towards them are Haxby, Murton, Bishopthorpe,

Copmanthorpe, The Poppletons and Skelton. These Plans is based on a review of historic Ordnance Surveys. It is not complete for the outer settlements and as it stands it is merely indicative of the historic process not a comprehensive evaluation. However such an exercise is one which it would have been appropriate for the LPA to have undertaken in establishing an evidence base upon which to predicate policy.

- 2.8.4 Intermediate and isolated growth areas such as at ST14 and ST 7 appears to be entirely inappropriate, without precedent, and without justification. They are contrary to NPPF policy. Whereas alternative patterns of growth towards the nearest settlements from the inner core would be more in keeping with both historical patterns and National Policy at para. 84 of the NPPF. Again there is no evidence an alternative growth pattern has been considered by the LPA..
- 2.8.5 There is no evidence, justification or apparent reason to consider any washed over settlements.
- 2.8.6 The outer boundaries of inset settlements should be tightly drawn and only limited development permitted. There is unfortunately no guidance given on this issue in the Primary Policy but previous iterations, including SoS modifications in 1980, proposed that approach. Such an approach is not compatible with the proposed allocation ST9 and ST36.
- 2.8.7 The most sustainable pattern of development would be to consider development allocations in the areas cross-hatched \_ on the Plan at **Annexe V iv**. Once these have been allocated the secondary areas which are hatched could serve for any unmet development needs or as safeguarded land to secure the permanence of the Green Belt. However, that whole approach requires a comprehensive assessment of the topography to provide an evidence base for such policies. This process needs to resolve any areas to be kept open as Green Wedges for preserving the setting and special carácter of the City and a sequential approach to development within the remainder. It is submitted that the majority of the area within the 3.34mile radius could be available over time for development, thus allowing York to revert to its historic status as a major City in the UK.
- 2.8.8 Proposal maps should be provided for inset boundaries and inner boundaries at an appropriate scale so that existing property boundaries can be clearly identified to facilitate certainty in development control matters.

## 2.9.0 Safeguarded Land.

- 2.9.1 It is reasonable to assume that a Green Belt ring of 2.66 miles wide would be a suitable objective of the Primary Policy. This would preserve the open rural landscape around the City, which is its historic setting, with the occasional small-scale rural settlement inset within its general extent. Such a setting would reflect the historic form of the City of York, though it is the open rural landscape rather than the inset villages that is the essence of the setting.
- 2.9.2 Bringing areas of Green Belt within the 3.34 miles inner radius will require deletions of areas in the 2.66 miles ring to maintain the appropriate scale of the YGB at 50,000 acres. That would be undesirable, so protection of open areas inside the 3.34 radius should be addressed through other forms of policy such as Green Wedge policy. Otherwise the additional areas of Green Belt would be an expansion of the general extent and as such would require the justification of exceptional circumstances.
- 2.9.3 An important issue which requires to be resolved is the urban form beyond the existing urban core. If York is to project the character of a compact City then the issue of design treatment at the 'gateways' will be very important and the City needs to present itself progressively going forward as an abrupt and significant end to the openness of the Green Belt as it did in former times when the City was set within the City Walls. The damage of low density and suburban development needs to be redressed by sound and well thought out design policies.

#### **2.10.0 Green Wedges**

- 2.10.1 The LPA have long identified the Strays as areas within the urban core that they consider appropriate to protect from built development, though that may well be something which is already addressed through other legislation. The Strays could be adequately protected by Green Wedge policy and that could be more protective than Green Belt policy.
- 2.10.2 There are undoubtedly other areas within a 3.34 mile radius of the City Centre that are open and that the LPA would wish to also protect for a variety of reasons some of which are covered by evidenced based findings to justify such an approach.
- 2.10.3 The LPA have always considered these areas as to be incorporated into the Green Belt but the reasons for that required protection is often for other reasons or additional reasons to the limited purpose of the YGB. The LPA do not appear to have considered alternative policy approaches but clearly Green Wedge policy provides both a suitable if not preferential alternative. It is a more suitable policy approach

both where the land penetrates into the urban core and where other reasons, such as nature conservation, apply.

2.10.4 It is submitted that this approach should be explored and until an alternative approach is considered the PDLP is not justified.

### **2.11.0 Conclusions.**

2.11.1 The conclusions which are set out below are drawn both from the text of this Chapter but also from the review and analysis of the relevant Appendices (Appendices 1 – 5), where conclusions have also been drawn, categorised and numbered. There are 15 conclusions classified as Assessments and 18 Conclusions. These conclusions are based on a review of the material set out in the Annexes.

2.11.2 A broad objection is made to the PDLP Proposals for Green Belt designation on the basis that:

- The LPA have misconceived or incorrectly applied the purpose of the YGB to their process and that is of fundamental relevance to the outcomes,
- That the LPA has used the 1991 and/or 1998 Proposals as a template for establishing the boundaries and those proposals were fundamentally flawed and unsound.

2.11.2 An approach which recognised a correct interpretation of the Primary Policy and the fact that it and other historical statements from Central Government do not prescribe a tight inner boundary, would place the inner boundary away from the urban core to a significant extent. No reason is set out in the PDLP process as to why this obvious alternative approach has not been considered. Such an approach would in turn lead to a sustainable pattern of development land allocation which could be accommodated within an appropriate inner boundary along with a suitable levels of safeguarded land to ensure the permanence of the YGB for generations to come.

2.11.3 The Proposals Map fails to distinguish between the outer boundary being proposed for the YGB that is within the District and those lengths which are merely the District boundary. The scale of those maps is inappropriate for subsequent development control purposes particularly as to the inset boundaries and the inner boundary.

2.11.4 Where the outer boundary proposals extend beyond a 6-mile radius and there is a suitable boundary to be identified at about 6-miles, the extensions are proposals for new Green belt (not covered by the general extent or Primary Policy) and

require exceptional circumstances to be demonstrated in the PDLP process. Thus for example Wheldrake should be located outside the YGB. No exceptional circumstances have been advanced in the PDLP process.

- 2.11.5 The process should demonstrate a cross-border cooperation to appropriately resolve the outer boundary at 6-miles or thereabouts as this is a strategic issue. The process should also correct the errors of the 1991 Proposals now reflected in adopted Local plans of neighbouring LPAs.
- 2.11.6 It is entirely unsound to propose a new settlement within the YGB and allocation ST15 should be declared an unsound proposal. As it varies the quantum of the YGB it should also have been promoted on the basis of exceptional circumstances.
- 2.11.7 The concept of extending Haxby outwards rather inwards in accordance with NPPF policy is unsound for the same reasons as set out in 2.11.6. In the case of proposed allocations ST15 and ST9 could be avoided by a more relaxed inner boundary and that would be a more sustainable pattern of development.
- 2.11.8 The PDLP should define the centre of York in order to demonstrate how Policy Y1. C.1 has been implemented.
- 2.11.9 The PDLP fails to demonstrate or be supported by an evidence base that demonstrates how the outer boundary proposals have been determined in accordance with Policy Y1. C.1.
- 2.11.10 The PDLP fails to demonstrate or be supported by an evidence base that demonstrates how the inner boundary proposals have been determined in accordance with Policy YH.9. C.
- 2.11.11 The PDLP fails to demonstrate or be supported by an evidence base that demonstrates how the status of settlements within the YGB should be resolved.
- 2.11.12 The Proposals Map need associated Inset Maps for settlements to be at a different scale so that the location of boundaries can be clearly ascertained for development control purposes. This is in any event a legal requirement.
- 2.11.13 The PDLP should explain the reasons why departure from the Key Diagram is necessary for resolving the inner boundary and what alternative approaches were considered particularly having regard to the detailed assessment of the area of the general extent in PPG2 1988 and the description of the YGB in the DoE Booklet of 1988.

2.11.14 In so far as the Green Belt proposals rely on the 1991 and 1998 Local Plans they are unsound and the LPA should clarify the relationship of their current proposals with those earlier Local Plans in light of the wholesale change in both Primary and National Policy since those dates.

## CHAPTER 3 - THE EVIDENCE BASE

### 3.1.0 Overview.

3.1.1 Para. 158 of the NPPF is the first para. under a sub section headed '*using a proportionate evidence base*'.

3.1.2 The evidential issue in respect of the Proposals for Green Belt designation in the PDLP are to be assessed as to whether the document is based on evidence or supported by retrospective evidence.

3.1.3 It is the submission of this Response that all the evidence to support the Green Belt designations - outer and inner boundary, inset boundaries and status of settlements is retrospective evidence because the Proposals are essentially those of the 1991 YGBLP. Accordingly, the PDLP is not a document which is predicated on a proportionate evidence base.

3.1.4 The evidence base of the LPA comprises 5 documents being:

- The approach to the Green Belt Appraisal (2003) City of York Council
- The approach to the Green Belt Appraisal North Map (2003) City of York Council
- The approach to the Green Belt Appraisal South Map (2003) City of York Council
- Historic Character and Setting Update (2011)
- Historic Character and Setting Technical Paper Update (2013)

3.1.5 The first three items were prepared to support the Proposals in the 1998 CoYLP process where the process was by way of Public Inquiry. That process required the evidence to justify the Proposals not the proposals to be based on the evidence as is now the case.

3.1.6 The Historic Character & Setting Papers of 2011 and 2013 are express to supplement the 2003 material.

3.1.7 The only changes which are proposed that alter the 1998 Proposals are those which give effect to the consequences of development land allocations. As an approach

that confirms the PDLP Proposals are not new and not based on the Primary Policy of the RSS adopted in 2008 but are in essence those of the 1998 Plan which in turn was based on the 1991 YGBLP.

3.1.8 The 1991 YGBLP was not an evidence-based plan nor was the 1998 Plan.

3.1.9 It follows that the PDLP proposals for Green Belt designations are not evidence based. The merits of the evidence presented by the LPA, which is retrospective evidence, is discussed below but the outcome of that analysis is that the evidence itself is inadequate for the purpose of resolving the necessary Secondary Policy. It is not therefore proportionate.

3.1.10 Finally, it is also apparent that the LPA possesses relevant evidence that they had decided to withhold namely the Final Report by ECUS 2000 on *The Historic Character and Setting of York* (**Annexe IV ii page 675**) Such conduct is not fair or transparent. Although that evidence also pre-dates the Primary Policy, the report proposes an approach based on an evidenced based appraisal. It displays an alternative approach and one more in keeping with the Primary Policy as it was subsequently indicated in the RSS Key Diagram.

### **3.2.0 Relevant Considerations**

3.2.1 The MHCLG provide guidance for the clarity in production and deliverability of Local Plans.

3.2.2 Under the heading '*what evidence is needed to support the policies in a Local Plan*' the guidance states:

1. Appropriate and proportionate evidence is essential for producing a sound Local Plan, and paragraph 158 (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-planning-policy-framework/plan-making#para158>) onwards of the National Planning Policy Framework sets out the types of evidence that may be required. This is not a prescriptive list; the evidence should be focused tightly on supporting and justifying the particular policies in the Local Plan. Evidence of cooperation (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/duty-to-cooperate>) and considering different options for meeting development needs will be key for this process.
2. The evidence needs to inform what is in the plan and shape its development rather than being collected retrospectively. It should also be kept up-to-date. For example, when approaching submission, if key

studies are already reliant on data that is a few years old, they should be updated to reflect the most recent information available (and, if necessary, the plan adjusted in the light of this information and the comments received at the publication stage). Local planning authorities should publish documents that form part of the evidence base as they are completed, rather than waiting until options are published or a Local Plan is published for representations. This will help local communities and other interest consider the issues and engage with the authority at an early stage in developing the Local Plan. It will also help communities bringing forward neighborhood plans (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/neighbourhood-planning--2>), who may be able to use this evidence to inform the development of their own plans.

3.2.3 In so far as a plan relies upon other local other plans the guidance clearly states these need to have been adopted since the NPPF was introduced (my emphasis). That accordingly excludes the 1991 & 1998 Plans on both counts (para: 015 Reference ID 12-015-20140300) as they were neither adopted nor post-date the NPPF.

3.2.4 The assessment of the evidence needs to resolve whether it is the basis for the proposed policy, which include the designations on the Proposal Maps, or it is retrospective Justification. This assessment is done under the terms of Para 158 of the NPPF as described in the guidance.

3.2.5 A key issue here is that in respect of the Green Belt proposals the policy has to conform with the Primary Policy.

3.2.6 The Primary Policy, which amongst other matters stated the purpose of the YGB, was adopted in May 2008. The 2003 evidence pre-dates the Primary Policy and considers a range of purposes, most of which are not applicable to the adopted Primary Policy.

3.2.7 The Primary Policy sets out the purpose of the YGB as being: -

**[To] protect and enhance the nationally significant historical and environmental character of York, including its historic setting, views of the Minster and important open areas.**

3.2.8 The more recent evidence base, the technical papers of 2011 and 2013, firstly relate themselves to the 2003 work and secondly do not express the purpose as set out in the Primary Policy but refers to a purpose set out in more general terms within the NPPF.

- 3.2.9 The LPA do hold some relevant experience upon which policies could be based that is the Final Report of the ECUS in 2000 (**Annexe IV ii page 675**). It is not in itself adequate, although in that it addresses historic character and setting and adopts a clean sheet approach basis, it does not separately attempt to identify the issues which are of national significance.
- 3.2.10 It is correct that some evidence was deduced to justify the 1991 YGBLP but that Plan was not a plan based on evidence. One piece of evidence to which weight was attached by the Plan Inspector was views of the Minster from the newly constructed northern ring road. That was now 28 years ago and a great many of these views no longer exist due to the maturing landscape planting around the inside ring road boundary. An up-to-date assessment is required for the evidence base and to guide policy formation.
- 3.2.11 The proposals in the PDLP in respect of Green Belt indicate two factors which affect the general extent specifically, namely:
- there are proposed areas of Green Belt significantly beyond a 6-mile radius where there is the potential, in accordance with the guidance at Para 85 NPPF, to define a boundary closer to a 6-mile radius, and
  - It is proposed to exclude new areas within the general extent between the inner and outer boundaries (however they are defined) by creating large-scale allocations either by expanding settlements or simply inseting new development.
- 3.2.12 Paras. 82 & 83 NPPF describe situations where proposals need to be supported by exceptional circumstances. That process requires a specific evidence base. No such evidence base is indicated as supporting the PDLP. However, the areas beyond the 6-mile radius as described at the first bullet point above are proposals for '*new green belt*' and if exceptional are needed to revise boundaries the same rule must apply to taking areas out of the Green. Whilst the NPPF only envisages that adjustment to the area of a Green Belt would only arise through boundary adjustments, the concept of a new settlement or large-scale allocations to be inset within the Green Belt must require the same level of evidential support and justification.

### **3.3.0 Analysis of the Evidence**

- 3.3.1 The material from 2003 is both retrospective evidence, because it seeks to support a proposal that had already been made (in this case the 1998 Proposals), but it is made

under considerations such as preventing coalescence with neighboring villages, which are not within the terms of the Primary Policy.

- 3.3.2 That is not a purpose of the YGB, it is inconsistent with the approach to sustainable patterns of development as described at Para 84 NPPF and it reflects a misconceived interpretation of the purposes of Green Belt set out at bullet points two of para 80. as evidenced by the GBWG Report of the 11.03.2002 (**Annexe IV VII**) where the LPA conclude that in the case of York, the expression '*neighboring towns*' in the NPPF (or formerly within PPG2) means '*neighboring villages*.' A clear example of confirmation bias.
- 3.3.3 It follows that this evidence does not justify the proposals of the PDLP.
- 3.3.4 The Technical Reports of 2011 and 2013 again are merely documents to amend or augment the inappropriate and misdirected evidence of 2003.
- 3.3.5 Another weakness of the 2011 and 2013 Technical Reports is they are based on work by a Parish Council and objections of local residents. As such, the issues raised are by nature matters of local importance at best. The Primary Policy requires an evidence base which defines *the nationally significant issues* and there is simply no evidence in this respect.
- 3.3.6 The one issue upon which this Response would support the LPA's evidential approach is that an Environmental Capacity Study is not necessary. However, the reason that conclusion in this Response is that a National Policy compliant methodology for such an exercise does not exist. The LPA's reason that it has undertaken sufficient evidential investigation is not accepted as a justifiable basis for this conclusion.
- 3.3.7 It is clear that the evidence base requires a well-conceived assessment of what the appropriate setting or settings should be for the evidential analysis. There is an extract of a Report prepared by Atkins for Saltaire which indicates that the scope and detail that such a piece of work needs to embrace. This document is submitted as an example not a template. (**Appendix 6 section 5.0 page 102**).
- 3.3.8 Appendix 8 also addresses the material on *confirmation bias* which is an unhelpful psychological influence that can and does affect institutions in addressing evidence. The Appendix also sets out examples of behaviour by the LPA in the Local Plan process which indicates events that demonstrate this psychological condition.

### 3.4.0 Conclusions

- 3.4.1 The evidence to support the Green Belt Proposals does not represent the evidence base for the proposals but is a retrospective evidence base to justify pre-formed proposals that are in themselves not in conformity with the Primary Policy.
- 3.4.2 The evidence base is, in any event, inadequate as it does not fully address the framework of the Primary Policy particularly as to the purpose of the YGB, the relevant views of the Minster from the Green Belt or within the inner boundary and issue of '*the nationally significant historic and environmental character of York*'.
- 3.4.3 The evidence base does not set out *the exceptional circumstances* required to justify certain of the proposed designations.
- 3.4.4 The application of the evidence by the LPA suffers from the impact of institutional confirmation bias including the withholding of relevant evidence as to the historic character and setting of York and misconceiving the policy framework for the process, such as in respect of the applicability of *coalescence*.
- 3.4.5 The consequence of these findings is that the PDLP is not justified.
- 3.4.6 The evidence does not indicate that alternative approaches to the inner boundary siting, such as at 3.34 miles from the city centre, have been considered. This also means the PDLP is not justified.
- 3.4.7 There is no evidence base to justify an absence of safeguarded land.

## CHAPTER 4 – GREEN BELT POLICIES AND ALLOCATIONS.

### 4.1.0 Overview.

4.1.1 Green Belt is an area where National Policy has been consistent over a significant period of time. Although the National Policies have been augmented particularly with reference to achieving sustainable patterns of development since 1995 they have consistently addressed managing appropriate development in and constraining inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

4.1.2 It is not appropriate for National Policy to be included in a Local Plan and it is to be avoided wherever possible. Attempting to set out policy which is covered in the NPPF by using different language is a dangerous practice as it can create ambiguity and that in turn can undermine National Policy. This practice is expressly discouraged by the Consultation version of the NPPF, para 16F, March 2018.

4.1.3 Emerging National policy making guidance makes it clear that Local Plans are to provide policies for specific local issues. It is not the purpose of Local Plan making to re-state or re-phrase National Policy contained in the NPPF or legislation.

4.1.4 In former PPG2 issues relating to development in Green Belt these issues were addressed under the heading 'control over development', in the NPPF at Para. 87 the issue is first addressed by reference to 'inappropriate development', but without a heading, and in the emerging NPPF under the heading 'Proposals affecting the Green Belt.' The PDLP head 'appropriate' development which sends out the wrong signal.

4.1.5 Section 10 of the PDLP raises two questions

- Why is it headed '*managing appropriate development*', and
- Why does it set out to re-state National Policy rather than limit itself to Local issues.

### 4.2.0 Green Belt Policies – Section 10 of the PDLP.

4.2.1 The analysis in this section relates to the PDLP policy proposals in Section 10 of the PDLP.

4.2.2 Issue relating to development within Green Belt are adequately covered by the NPPF and need not be addressed in the PDLP.

- 4.2.3 Development control issues within Inset Settlements should be addressed by other Local policies set out in the PDLP and not by Green Belt based policy concepts. This distinction is not made clearly in the PDLP.
- 4.2.4 In respect of infilling it is sensible and probably necessary, for the PDLP to define the settlements as being 'washed over' or inset. The approach in GB1 is to address all settlements within the one policy but that fails to deliver policy which identifies where development would be inappropriate as required by para 157 of the NPPF. It does not provide a clear indication of how the decision maker should react to development proposal as required by para 154 of the NPPF. Policy GB2 states in its explanation infill development might in some settlements be undesirable. However, the settlements are not identified. How is an application for development to know how this policy is to be applied? The explanation states it is location dependent but does not state which locations are or are not appropriate. Such a form of policy is not appropriate for a Local Plan.
- 4.2.5 Policy GB3 is again simply a re-stating of NPPF policy and does address any issue which is of a specific local nature. The policy is an unnecessary restatement of National Policy. The same issues at to GB4.

#### **4.3.0 Inappropriate Allocations**

- 4.3.1 A major thrust of Green Belt policy is to support the contribution it makes to sustainable development objectives. A key measure which the NPPF highlights in this respect to set out at para.84 of the NPPF relating to the drawing of the inner boundary of a Green Belt.
- 4.3.2 As has been set out in this Response, the LPA have failed to consider any alternative approach to the inner boundary and the inner boundary they have proposed is unsound. If a sound inner boundary was proposed, reflecting the Key Diagram of RSS, it could provide suitable locations for development land allocations on the inside of the inner boundary. The emerging NPPF also ties the issue to main transport routes and transport hubs.
- 4.3.3 Where land is allocated for development purposes within the inner boundary there may also be sound reason for allocating land to remain open. Primarily this land would be to achieve the purpose of safeguarding the special character of the City and the setting of the urban core. There may be additional reasons for such allocations as protecting or safeguarding ecological circumstances or for outdoor recreation and sport. However, the concept of creating landscape buffers to remove

or reduce objections from existing developed areas is not a sound planning reason and is not in the wider public interest. It is an unsustainable pattern of development and does not make the effective use of land.

4.3.4 Having regard to the issues highlighted above the following allocations are not soundly based:

ST7: There is no argument or reason for a separation between the proposed site and the urban core. Neither the proposed development area or the landscape buffer area is likely to be within the Green Belt when that is properly assessed. It would be more appropriate to develop between the inner core and Murton. Murton should not be within the Green Belt but within the inner boundary. This would be progressive development from the inner core in keeping with the historic character rather than a proposal of current fashion. The issue of 'garden city' style development is addressed in chapter 5.

ST 14: There is no legitimate reason for an open gap between the outer ring road and the proposed allocation. It is not sensible to locate this area detached from the existing urban core and main public transport routes. Garden village concept is in conflict with the compact nature promoted by the PDLP.

Has any alternative location been considered? There is no evidence to indicate that although a much more obvious location would be better to the east of the A19 between the urban core and Skelton; between the urban core and The Poppletons; south and west of Wigginton or between Haxby and the urban core. There would be sustainable locations on transport routes.

ST 15: The concept of inserting a new settlement into a Green Belt is a proposal which is comprehensively contrary to the of Green Belt policy and has been since the date of its inception. It is a proposal that needs to be supported by exceptional circumstances.

ST2: This allocation needs no open or landscaping belt in relation to The Poppletons. The intersecting land is land most suitable for a current allocation for development which should provide as safeguarded land for future allocation or used in substitution of other unsound proposals.

4.3.5 As a general approach inset boundaries should be tightly drawn and any expansion of inset settlements constrained. Not to do so would erode the openness of the

Green Belt which should provide essentially open rural land around York. Accordingly:

ST9: Is an inappropriate allocation. The development requirement that this allocation would provide should be located when the inner boundary and adjacent to the urban core as a sequentially preferable location. It is an erosion of the Green Belt within its outer and inner boundaries, defined or not, and as such should be supported by exceptional circumstances.

ST35: The development proposals should be tightly constricted to reduce loss of openness to a minimum. Again, this is a site which requires the justification of exceptional circumstances.

#### **4.4.0 Conclusions**

4.4.1 The following conclusions relate to the proposed policies at Section 10 of the PDLP:

- The policy at GB1, GB3 & GB4 is an unnecessary repetition of NPPF policy and should be deleted.
- The policy at GB2 is lacking in detail that would make it clear to an applicant that development was or was not permissible. In any event this should be addressed (for inset settlements) by specific non-Green Belt related policy. The PDLP does not contain adequate policy, justification or relate to an evidence base which defines settlements in the YGB as washed-over, limited in-fill or otherwise. Such evidenced based policy is required. Accordingly, the policy at GB2 is unsound.

4.4.2 The conclusion as to the Allocations ST2, ST7, ST9, ST14, ST15, AND ST35 as proposed in the PDLP are not soundly based for the reasons stated in 4.3.4 and 4.3.5 above. Such allocations should be sited within the inner boundary and sequentially distributed in relation to major transport routes as identified on the version of the Key Diagram at **Annexe V xiv**.

## CHAPTER 5 – DESIGN & HERITAGE POLICIES.

### 5.1.0 Overview.

- 5.1.1 This section of the PDLP relates to issues around design and form on the one hand and heritage assets on the other as set out in Section 8 of the PDLP.
- 5.1.2 The objection in connection with the design and form policies D1, D2 and D3 is that they reflect misconceptions about these issues and fail to provide positive local based policy that will shape the surroundings and be positively prepared in a way that is aspirational and deliverable. The objective must be to provide a clear and unambiguous policy in a way which makes it evident how the decision maker will react to a proposal. This is simply not achieved.
- 5.1.3 The objection in connection with the heritage policies is that they are a repetition of legislative provisions and NPPF Policy. As a process this is unnecessary and inappropriate for a Local Plan. They also fail to give a clear and unambiguous steer about how decision makers will react.

### 5.2.0 Design and Form Policies

- 5.2.1 The PDLP lists 6 key characteristics for York, one of which is 'Compactness'. It is believed this is not just a matter of local opinion but a professional analysis probably deriving from the Baxter Associates study of the Historic Core.
- 5.2.2 Firstly, a reference to the Corine Map at Annexe V indicates that the 'continuous urban fabric', a key element of a compact city, is not at a recordable level. The urban core is classified as 'discontinuous urban fabric' which is a lesser compact form. The continuous urban fabric at Cambridge and Oxford is much greater.
- 5.2.3 It is not clear whether local planners and politicians fully understand the phrase 'Compact City.'

*'The compact city or city of short distances is an urban planning and urban design concept, which promotes relatively high residential density with mixed land uses. It is based on an efficient public transport system and has an urban layout which - according to its advocates - encourages walking and cycling, low energy consumption and reduced pollution. A large resident population provides*

*opportunities for social interaction as well as feeling of safety in numbers and 'eyes on the street'. It is also arguably a more sustainable urban settlement type than urban sprawl because it is less dependent on the car, requiring less (and cheaper per capita) infrastructure provisions (Williams 2000, cited in Dempsey 2010)'*

- 5.2.4 The OECD did in 2012 make a comparative assessment of Compact City Policies. The cities compared were Melbourne, Vancouver, Paris, Toyama and Portland. That indicates that 'compactness' is a description of urban form not urban scale.
- 5.2.5 Michael Newman, an associate professor of urban planning at Texas A&M University addressed in an academic paper the issue of sustainability in respect of compact cities by comparison to the antitheses of that urban form the garden city. It is inexplicable why York should on the one hand claim itself to be a compact city and on the other hand promotes a garden village-based concept for strategic housing allocation such as ST14 or ST15. Clearly that is to promote an urban form, not only disconnected as previously argued against, but in a style and form that contrasts with the promoted historic character of compactness which is York.
- 5.2.6 Whilst the compact form is supported, the PDLP lacks the policies to implement that strategic concept, for example, it would be appropriate to have specific design policies for the 'gateway' points from the green belt to the urban core.
- 5.2.7 In overall terms the narrative of Policy D1 and its explanation is too generated and lacks the specificity to direct design to achieve the objectives of a compact city.
- 5.2.8 The promotion of Green Wedge policies to cover the open areas within and extending from the urban core would achieve a positive strategic framework in place of the vague and imprecise approach of Policy D2.

### **5.3.0 Heritage Policies.**

- 5.3.1 The policies should identify the evidence base against which development control decisions affecting heritage assets will be made.
- 5.3.2 In so far as the major element of Policy D4, D5, D6 & D8 cover establish national policy they should be deleted. Policies in this area need to relate to specific local issues only not general issues of development control.

### **5.4.0 Conclusions.**

5.4.1 The following conclusions are drawn in respect of PDLP policies D1, D2 & D3:

- The design ambition of the PDLP needs to resolve the dichotomy between the concept of York being a '*compact city*' and having '*garden city*' suburbs.
- The policies on design need to be more specific and give greater clarity in order to deliver a local based place-making framework which allows decision making to be clear, unambiguous and transparent.

5.4.2 Repetition of established national policy in respect of heritage issues does not require to be incorporated in the PDLP where no clear cut local issues are highlighted. Policy D5, D6, & D8 should be deleted.



## **CHAPTER 6 - SUMMARY OF OBJECTIONS AND THEIR BASIS.**

### **6.1.0 Overview.**

6.1.1 This chapter draws together the objections set out in this Response and attaches to each objection the appropriate test of soundness which is applicable.

6.1.2 The objections are set out under 4 headings which comprise:

- The Green Belt designations of the PDLP.
- The development land allocations of the PDLP.
- The Green Belt development control policies of Section 10 of the PDLP.
- The Placemaking, design and heritage policies of Section 8 of the PDLP.

6.1.3 In relation to the first two headings of objection, the objections relate both to the nature of the policies included or omitted but also to the inadequacies of their evidence base.

6.1.4 Taken as a whole, it is submitted these objections conclude the PDLP is unfit for purpose and that these issues need notifying to the Secretary of State, who has already recorded his concerns about the failings of the LPA in the plan making process. That the objections are so fundamental, the Plan Inspector should indicate that the PDLP is unsound to the extent that it cannot be remedied by modification.

6.1.5 It is submitted that it would be helpful, if not essential, for the Plan Inspector to provide a detailed steer on these fundamental failings bearing in mind that the outcome in 1998, which highlighted one fundamental flaw, did not enlighten the LPA to the other flaws which then existed and have continued to exist over the intervening 20 years.

### **6.2.0 The Green Belt Designations.**

6.2.1 This objection is both to the overall approach to the designation of the YGB and also separately to:

- The proposals for the outer boundary,
- The proposals for the inner boundary,

- The status of the settlement within the YGB,
- The inset boundaries,
- The provision of safeguarded land, and
- The need for 'Green Wedge Policy' within the inner boundary.

6.2.2 A key factor to these objections is that the PDLP fails to identify the policy framework within which the Green Belt designations have to be made, namely the designations have to conform to the policy set out in the RSS Revocation Order and the Key Diagram of the RSS. These documents set out specific policies and guidance in relation to the individual aspects of the designations, such as the inner and outer boundaries, but also set out the purpose of the YGB.

6.2.3 The purpose of the YGB is not set out in the PDLP and references to it in the text of PDLP indicate that the LPA misconceive the purpose as set out in the RSS Revocation Order. This issue is set out in detail at Chapter 2, section 5 above.

6.2.4 The purpose of the YGB would require an evidence base for the PDLP that identified and assessed the nationally significant historical and environmental character of the City. This is not provided nor is any statement that identifies the appropriate viewpoints of views of the Minster. Whilst there is some attempt to provide evidence of the historic setting and important open areas because this is not set within the context of the properly defined purpose, it is inadequate.

6.2.5 From the issues identified at 6.2.4 above the PDLP fails to be based on an adequate evidence base (contrary to para. 158 of the NPPF) and does not conform with the RSS Policy.

6.2.6 The Key Diagram indicates that the inner boundary is not tightly drawn to the existing urban core. The PDLP adopts a tightly drawn inner boundary without providing any justification or consultation of reasonable alternatives. The approach of the PDLP to the inner boundary gives rise to the following outcomes:

- The PDLP cannot deliver a sustainable pattern of development as envisaged by para. 84 of the NPPF,

- It increases the area of the YGB beyond that to be created based on an outer 6-mile radius boundary. The increased area is not justified by an evidence base which set out the exceptional circumstances for creating new (additional) Green Belt.

6.2.7 Accordingly the PDLP is neither positively prepared nor justified.

The Outer Boundary.

6.2.8 The outer boundary is not defined in relation to any criteria or evidence base. It adopts a line which was first presented in the 1991 YGBLP (a plan which was not evidence based but predicated upon a political agreement between neighboring authorities).

6.2.9 The outer boundary extends in places well beyond the 6-mile radius where there are clearly identifiable boundaries that could be established closer (often much closer) to the 6-mile radius. Any designation beyond a boundary at about a 6-mile radius is a proposal for new Green Belt and should be supported by exceptional circumstances. It is not.

6.2.10 The reason for the extensions of the YGB around Wheldrake (within the LPA District) and Escrick (in Selby District) predicated in 1991 were to constrain development pressure, perceived to arise from the creation of the YGB. That is not one or a purpose of the YGB as defined in RSS Policy. It accordingly does not conform with the policy. It represents a proposal that previous SoS indicated would undermine Green Belt policy nationally.

6.2.11 The PDLP does not indicate what lengths are the actual the outer boundary of the YGB and which are merely the District boundary. The outer boundary is a strategic policy and there is a lack of cross boundary strategy and cooperation to achieve an appropriate outer boundary for the YGB as a whole. Accordingly, the PDLP is not effective.

The Inner Boundary

6.2.12 The key diagram indicates an inner boundary beyond the inner core. PPG2 of 1988 indicated an area for the YGB of 50,000 acres based on a 6-mile outer radius. There was no change indicated in the RSS policy, which was adopted to continue that which existed from 1980 as Primary Policy for the YGB. That area and the Key Diagram indicate a similar location for the inner boundary.

6.2.13 The PDLP provides no evidence or other justification for the inner boundary not being by and large beyond the outer ring road. The PDLP approach mitigates against sustainable development and the historic pattern of growth.

6.2.14 The inner boundary proposals of the PDLP are not consistent with the Primary Policy or national policy to deliver sustainable development and are not justified or positively prepared or effective.

#### The Status and definition of Settlements

6.2.15 The PDLP provides no criteria or evidential justification to define the status of settlements within the YGB. The PDLP should clearly define which settlements are washed-over and why, which are subject to limited in-fill and (if necessary) which are to accommodate growth.

6.2.16 It is submitted a properly defined inner boundary would allow limited in-fill only for all inset settlement. There is no apparent reason to believe any washed over settlements could be justified.

6.2.17 The PDLP should provide Inset Boundary Plans adequate to facilitate development control and give clarity to decision making.

#### Safeguarded Land

6.2.18 An appropriately defined inner boundary would effectively be a permanent limit to the growth of York.

6.2.19 National based assessments in 1962 and 1988 indicate that, unlike Oxford and Cambridge, York had no clearly obvious limit. This alone is good reason to ensure the inner boundary is not tightly drawn.

6.3.20 As this submission displays there is the potential to identify significant areas of land for potential development within a properly drawn inner boundary. The PDLP should accordingly strive to identify safeguarded land that will provide for future development growth for many years to come. This will not only indicate that York has the facility to accommodate sustained growth but also removes the false impression of the local public perception that land adjacent to the urban core is excluded from the prospect of future development.

6.2.21 The lack of safeguarded land means that the PDLP is not positively prepared, justified or consistent with national policy.

## Green Wedges

6.2.22 It is apparent that there are important open green areas (the Strays) and the river corridor which penetrates into the urban core that requires safeguarding.

6.2.23 This is not the role of Green Belt policy and the PDLP should provide Green Wedge policy to afford the appropriate protection for the existing spaces and to shape future growth within the inner boundary. There is no evidence that the LPA considered this reasonable alternative approach.

6.2.24 The absence of this approach indicates the PDLP is not possibly prepared, justified or consistent with National Policy.

### **6.3.0 Development Land Allocation**

6.3.1 It is the submission of the objection that a number of the allocations are inappropriate in terms of soundness given that the designation of the YGB is unjustified. However, on the basis that the objections at 6.2 above are appropriate, these allocations are even more lacking in any justification or are consistent with national policy.

6.3.2 The single most inappropriate allocation proposal of the PDLP is ST 15 which proposes in effect a new settlement within the YGB. Such a proposition must require exceptional circumstances to justify it. None are provided. However, the proposals for ST 14 and ST 17 are similar in nature and the same objection applies.

6.3.3 These allocations (ST 14, ST 15 & ST 17) along with ST 9 and ST 19 are not consistent with national policy, specifically para 84 of the NPPF, which indicate development should be located within the inner boundary. Along with the proposal for ST 12 there is no justification for creating landscape buffers and separation just to avoid or diminish the opposition of local residents. The YGB is to protect issues of national significance and localised nimby opposition does not outweigh that imperative.

6.3.4 The proposals for ST 35 should be constrained to limited in-filling in accordance with the standard approach within Green Belt.

6.3.5 These allocations listed in this section are not consistent with national policy, not positively prepared and not justified.

#### **6.4.0 Green Belt development control.**

- 6.4.1 The proposals are, as described in Chapter 4, poorly constructed but to a significant extent merely re-state existing national policy. That is not consistent with National Policy and an issue which the current Consultation version of the NPPF emphasise is not appropriate in a Local Plan.
- 6.4.2 Policies GB1, 3 & 4 should be deleted and GB2 requires an evidence base which allows it to be implemented with clarity and certainty.

#### **6.5.0 Design & Heritage.**

- 6.5.1 The PDLP produces proposals which are juxta-posed in the form of '*Compact City*' and '*Garden City*' concepts.
- 6.5.2 The PDLP needs to provide both clarity on this ambitious approach to design and placemaking and clearer local based design policy and guidance.
- 6.5.3 On heritage issues the PDLP seeks to re-state National policy which is inappropriate for a Local Plan.

#### **6.6.0 The Objections as a whole.**

- 6.6.1 It is submitted that the fundamental misconception of the Green Belt designation goes to the root of the PDLP structure and renders it unsound.
- 6.6.2 The unnecessary repetition of national policy is inappropriate for a Local Plan.
- 6.6.3 The local policies on Place-making and design are without the necessary clarity for decision making.
- 6.6.4 It is submitted this PDLP is fundamentally unsound and incapable of being made acceptable by modification.

## **APPENDIX 1 – LOCAL GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE.**

### **1.0 Overview.**

1.1 This Appendix reviews the structure of Local Government in the Greater York Area (GYA) between 1955 and to date.

1.2 There are three main eras within the overall timeframe :

- 1955 to 1974,
- 1974 to 1996, and
- 1996 to date.

1.3 In reviewing the structures within each period regard is had to the prevailing legislative and regulatory framework of Town & Country Planning which then applied.

### **2.0 1955 to 1974.**

2.1 The primary planning jurisdiction in the GYA during this period was divided between four Local Planning Authorities.

2.2 At the heart of the GYA was a compact area, not much greater than the current urban core, which was the County Borough of York. The remaining parts of the area were divided between the three County Councils of the Ridings of Yorkshire.

2.3 Within each Riding there were second-tier authorities which all had the similar status but some had delegated planning powers and some did not. These authorities were variously entitled as Rural District or Urban Districts or Town Councils.

### **3.0 1974 to 1996.**

3.1 The 1974 restructuring redefined the County areas and the new areas had new names such as North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC) and the West Yorkshire County Council. The East Riding was enlarged to incorporate parts of Lincolnshire and was named Humberside County Council. The restructuring also created larger second-tier authorities which in the case of the GYA were Hambleton, Ryedale, Selby and Harrogate. The County Borough area remained the same but became a second-tier authority to NYCC and was renamed York City Council.

- 3.2 The newly created NYCC encompassed much of the former North Riding and parts of the East and West Ridings. The NYCC then encompassed the whole of the GYA and was responsible for Structure Plan planning. Thus, the GYA and the potential YGB were from 1974 were within the NYCC administrative area but also divided between the second-tier areas of 5 District Councils.
- 3.3 The planning powers of the second-tier authorities were increased and they became responsible for development control and Local Plan making.
- 3.4 The first step in the process after restructuring was for a Structure Plan to establish the strategic framework. This would in turn enable the second-tier authorities to establish Local Plans within the Structure Plan policy framework. By the time the second-tier authorities formulated their Local Plans, these were required to be District-wide.
- 3.5 So, it was the responsibility of the NYCC to establish the general extent of the YGB and for the second-tier authorities to establish the boundaries, outer, inner and around inset settlements, to resolve the status of inset settlements and the requirement for safeguarded land.
- 3.5 The Structure Plan was approved in 1980 and altered in 1987 and 1989 then replaced with a revised Structure Plan in 1995.
- 3.6 It will be helpful to the Inspector to understand the Secretary of State's (SoS) position (and that of the previous overseeing office of State, the Minister of Housing and Local Government (MHLG)). It had consistently been the position of Government that to establish a Green Belt there had to be a comprehensive proposal which was agreed by all the involved authorities. Because this could not be achieved in the period from 1955 to 1980, the MHLG in 1957 had stated that he deemed a sketch plan green belt to exist around York. The legality of that position was never challenged but with hindsight it would appear to be an ultra vires act. More importantly no geographic area was attributed to the Minister's declaration.

#### **4.0 From 1996.**

- 4.1 Further restructuring arose in 1996 when the York City Council was expanded to form a new unitary authority the City of York Council (CoYC).
- 4.2 Subject to the loss of some Parishes to the CoYC, the position of the second-tier authorities of Hambleton, Ryedale, Selby and Harrogate remained the same.

- 4.3 The 2004 legislation provided for Structure Plans to be replaced by Regional Spatial Strategies.
- 4.4 The RSS policies for Yorkshire and the Humber were adopted in May 2008.
- 4.5 In the period after the 1980 Structure Plan had established the general extent of the YGB, the Secretary of State maintained the requirement for a comprehensive and agreed approach for the establishment of Secondary Policy as to boundaries etc. to be achieved through Local Plans. As co-ordinating the progress of 5 Local Plans in unison was an impossibility, the NYCC persuaded the SoS to allow a Local Plan to be promoted to establish the YGB Secondary Policy within the GYA.
- 4.6 This process was conducted between 1990 and 1994 but for a range of reasons including the 1996 pending re-structuring the proposals were never adopted.

## **5.0 The Greater York Area.**

- 5.1 The GYA was promoted as a concept by the NYCC to facilitate planning in and around York in a coordinated way between the 5 LPAs which had an interest in the area. It was in essence an area dominated by the influence of the City of York.
- 5.2 The Map below indicates the area of the GYA as defined by the NYCC in 1979. There is also a large-scale Map at **Annexe V ii**. It was not recognised by the Secretary of State until 1987.
- 5.3 When in 1996 the Unitary Authority of CoYC was created only the Parishes of Overton and Shipton (within Hambleton) and Upper Helmsley, Gate Helmsley and Warthill (within Ryedale) formerly within the GYA were excluded from the new authority's area.
- 5.4 Although it appears the issue was ever raised the GYA did not include all the geographic area necessary to provide a Green Belt having an outer boundary about 6-miles from the centre of York.
- 5.4 The GYA Study (**Annexe III ii page 434**) indicated that the area was between 5 and 8 miles from the centre of York but supposedly covered the whole of the general extent of the YGB. That clearly was a misconceived analysis as a radius of 6 miles includes parts of the following additional Parishes - Escrick, Stillingfleet, Acaster Malbis, Appleton Roebuck, Colton and Bilborough in the Selby District; Long Marston and Moor Moncton in the Harrogate District; Huby in the Hambleton District and Sand Hutton in the Ryedale District.



## 6.0 Analysis.

- 6.1 The diverse and changing framework of the administrative areas within the GYA coupled with the periodic changes in the regulatory framework have had significant impacts on the evolution of proposals in a way which was unhelpful to the outcomes and did cause delays. That analysis does not however provide the entirety of the causes for the sorry position which now prevails.

- 6.2 The analysis seeks to provide a discourse on matters which arise from the Local Government boundary and boundary changes issues but the analysis does draw on material that is reviewed in Appendices 2, 3 and 4 as well.

The general extent.

- 6.3 It is considered that the question of whether the YGB needs to extend beyond the CoYC boundary is an issue which should have been debated after 2008. In particular whether any parts of the Parishes listed in 5.4 above made a meaningful contribution to the fulfilment of the Primary Policy.
- 6.4 This Response submits that this is a strategic issue which should have been the subject not only of cross-border cooperation and that it required a comprehensive and agreed solution as had always been sought by successive Ministers and Secretaries of State. It is acknowledged that the position is made more difficult by the fact the surrounding LPAs have all adopted outer boundaries in extant Local Plans but like the PDLP proposals these all rest upon the 1991 YGBLP proposals.
- 6.5 It is accepted that there is a prima facie case for including areas within the 6-mile radius which are within the adjoining Districts but this needs to be reviewed with fresh and objective eyes.

Impacts relating to the purpose

- 6.6 An issue which is evident with the benefit of hindsight is that there was a serious disconnect between the priorities and ambitions of National Government with that of with that of the LPAs and second-tier authorities.
- 6.7 Put simply, the National view has always been that the purpose of the YGB is to safeguard the character of the historic City whilst the local ambition has been to protect the environs of York from development pressures. Whilst locally generated proposals have paid lip service to the safeguarding issue the review of the historic material reveals, that for local planners and politicians, development pressures have been the important motivation.
- 6.8 Whilst it is clear that the wording of the Primary Policy now extant is that the purpose of the YGB is a single one there is not a conscious understanding and acceptance by the LPAs involved that past ambitions for the YGB are not its purpose and that circumstance requires a change in their approach.

- 6.9 The explanation of the dichotomy most probably rests in the structure of Local Government between 1955 and 1974. The County Borough was a small geographic area essentially confined to the existing urban core. Around the urban core were rural authorities which encompassed both dormitory settlements and more rural communities. Two factors affected this relationship :
- The political control was in party political terms polarised between the City and the rural authorities,
  - The concern of the rural authorities was driven by the threat of development pressure from the urban centre.
- 6.10 When the rural areas were within three different County areas, two Counties were what is characterised as Shire Counties and one was industrially dominated. The neighbouring rural authorities were politically compatible with the Shire County politics. That position became comprehensive for the GYA when areas of the three Counties were amalgamated into NYCC.
- 6.11 The purpose of the YGB was not set out in any Policy until 2008 and before that it had always been promoted at local level as having as part of the purpose to constrain development pressures arising from the City. This is seen to continue through until the completion of the 1991 YGBLP process, which sought to expand the Green Belt around Wheldrake and Escrick because of the perceived development pressure arising from these settlements otherwise being just beyond the outer boundary.
- 6.12 Reading the evidence base of the 1991 YGBLP and the Inspector's Report, it appears his attention was not drawn to the various and consistent statements of National Government as to the single purpose that it perceived for the YGB, as stated in :
- The 1962 Booklet - *The Green Belts*, (**Annexe I ii**)
  - The Decision Letter to the NYCSP 1980, (**Annexe II iii**)
  - Answer to a Parliamentary Question on the 8<sup>th</sup> of November 1988, and
  - The Booklet - *The Green Belts* published 1988, (**Annexe I iv**)
- 6.13 Equally the local view on the purpose of the YGB to constrain development pressures is recorded by the fact of :
- The production of sketch plan schemes for rural authorities such as the Flaxton Town Map.

- The NYCC Report of Surveys 1979, (**Annexe II i**) which states '*it has been a clear-cut case that the objectives to contain urban growth and the special character*'. This statement reveals not only the perception but the priority of the issues in the mind of the County Authority.
- The NYCC 1980 Written Statement (**Annexe II ii**) which only refers to the purpose of the YGB in restraining urban sprawl.
- The 1981 NYCC Discussion Paper (**Annexe III i**) states the YGB is not intended to restrict development but then suggests the Green Belt should extend to 8 miles (presumably to restrict development in rural areas and settlements such as Wheldrake and Escrick)
- The Greater York Study, (**Annexe III ii**) which espouses limited peripheral growth and a new settlement beyond the Green Belt, states that the general philosophy of development restraint is the baseline approach (para. 26 **Annexe III ii page 431**).
- The YGBLP 1991 which proposes that all the purposes of Green Belt set out in PPG2 purposes may apply in respect of some areas within the YGB and more than one purpose may be relevant in any given case.

Impacts on the outer boundary.

- 6.14 NYCC had a track record of seeking to expand the coverage of Green Belt designation to constrain development pressures in rural areas and rural settlements. This culture re-emerges in the 1991 YGBLP proposals where the 6-mile radius is expanded to encompass Escrick and Wheldrake. In places this takes the Green Belt a further 1.3 miles beyond the policy limit. That has to be evaluated not in relation to a radius that extended to 6 miles from the centre of York but against a Green Belt, which comprising 50,000 acres (as per PPG2 1988) (**Annexe I iii**) would on average have a depth of 2.67 miles. Thus, in the YGBLP the outer boundaries were in parts significantly beyond a 6-mile radius and had the effect of making the belt 48% wider than the perceived average based on the PPG2 acreage.
- 6.15 A second factor which influenced the outer boundary was the regard given to former unapproved sketch plan proposals. This is evidenced both in respect of the preparations for the NYCSP 1980 policy for the general extent (where the Report of Surveys contains a Map which seeks to combined all the sketch maps at Figure 12.9) and in the consultation for the 1991 YGBLP where the 1990 Consultation Maps

(**Annexe V i**) show both the then combined sketch map green belt and areas to be added to it). The proposals in the PDLP reflect those past considerations.

Impacts on the inner boundary.

- 6.16 It appears in the run up to the 1980 NYCSP that the Strays were treated as a separate issue from the YGB – see Figure 12.9.
- 6.17 The Key Diagram (submission version **Annexe V v**) however indicates an entirely different approach with an inner boundary up to the urban core and including land penetrating into the City. That Key Diagram Inset plan is not subsequently incorporated into the adopted version or subsequent altered or revised versions.
- 6.18 By the time of the 1991 YGBLP the Strays and the tight inner boundary are taken as a given. The detailed arguments as to why that position was misconceived is addressed at Appendix 4.
- 6.19 The CoYC in 1996 was keen to progress a Local Plan and to accelerate that process determined to base its Green Belt proposals on the 1991 YGBLP (see **Annexe ###**). Thus the errors of the past were carried forward into the plan making process of CoYC and have never been objectively assessed by that LPA.

## **7.0 Conclusions**

- 7.1 As has been said the following conclusions do in part rely on subsequent analysis in Appendices 2,3 and 4, but to limit conclusions strictly to the analysis of the current Appendix would produce a somewhat disjointed outcome.
- 7.2 The conclusions are categorised as either ‘*Assessments*’ or ‘*Conclusions*’. The categories are explained at para. 1.3.9 of the Response at page 4. The Assessments are referred to by a letter **A** and the Conclusions by a letter **C** and both are then sequentially numbered throughout the Appendix section of the Response.
- 7.3 The Assessments are :

**A.1** The acceptance by the SoS in 1987 of the concept of the GYA was not related to a defined geographical area but it was intended to cover the general extent of the YGB. It did not do so but NYCC did not apply the 6-mile radius when it resolved the geographic area of the GYA.

**A.2** The requirement of the SoS for a comprehensive and agreed outer boundary was a sound approach but after 2004 the SoS was no longer directly involved because of the altered legislative and regulatory framework. The fragment elements of outer boundary set out in adopted Local Plans of neighbouring LPAs are based on the 1991 YGBLP proposals.

**A.3** The PDLP and its process require the comprehensive outcome of the outer boundary to be agreed as it is a strategic matter. However, it would be inappropriate to base this on the YGBLP proposals as is hereinafter explained but should be based on a 6-mile radius as a baseline. It would in that process be appropriate to consider the extent to which areas beyond the boundary of CoYC need to be maintained.

[Note : It is concluded elsewhere in this Response that the 1991 YGBLP was unsound and is in any event not in conformity with the Primary Policy which now is extant.]

#### 7.4 The Conclusions are :

**C.1** There were no sketch plans relating to land within the GYA which were approved. The MHLG's deemed sketch plan status for the YGB but the area was not defined geographically and the process was probably unlawful. Accordingly, sketch plans were never an appropriate basis for establishing the YGB

## APPENDIX 2 – NATIONAL POLICY

### 1.0 Overview

- 1.1 This Appendix reviews National Policy from published material between 1955 and to date in respect of Green Belt in the national context. The review of Primary Policy in Appendix 3 also touches on National Policy as it has to be consistent with it but does so in a context which is specific to York.
- 1.2 In the next section of this Appendix, is set out Figure GBNP, which is a chronology of events and publications which relate to the evolution of Green Belt policy, its application and the associated issue of '*green wedges*'.
- 1.3 There is then set out a review of the underlying documents relating to these policies and the documents themselves are at Annexe I.
- 1.4 The review is followed by an analysis from which conclusions are drawn.
- 1.5 Annexe I contains copies or extracts from the published material as the part of the evidence base for this Response. Annexe I principally underpins this Appendix and Chapter 3. However, the material does have relevance to both Primary and Secondary Policy which both have to be consistent with National Policy.

### 2.0 Review of Material at Annexe I

- 2.1 At Figure 1 – Green Belt National Policy overleaf is set out a chronology, which combines events and publications of relevance to green belt with significant legislative and regulatory changes relating to policy application.
- 2.2 When in 1898 Ebenezer Howard espoused the concept of Garden Cities, those proposals were predicated on the basis that these urban forms would be planned and self-contained. As such, Howard proclaimed '*(these communities) would be surrounded by green belts, containing balanced areas of residencies, industry and agriculture*'.
- 2.3 The emerging use of motorised personal transport gave rise to development along arterial roads outwards from urban centres. This triggered a campaign by the CPRE to restrict unplanned urban sprawl. By the 1930s this campaign focussed on establishing barriers to prevent ribbon development.

**Figure 1 – Chronology of Green Belt National Policy**

Date	Event or Occurrence
1898	Ebenezer Howard proposed Garden Cities surrounded by green belts.
1926	The CPRE campaign against urban sprawl.
1935	Restriction on Ribbon Development Act 1935 Greater London Regional Planning Committee proposes a green belt.
1947	Town & Country Planning Act 1947
1955	Circular 42/55 – Government recommends green belts to be established (wherever this is desirable) for one or more of three purposes including ' <i>to preserve the special character of a town</i> '.
1957	Circular 50/57 – advice of defining boundaries, inset and washed-over settlements.
1962	Town & Country Planning Act 1962 MHLG Booklet – The Green Belts
1968	Town & Country Planning Act 1968
1972	Town & Country Planning Act 1972
1984	Circular 14/84 advises on long-term boundaries, safeguarded land, derelict areas and recycling urban land.
1988	Planning Policy Guidance issued. PPG2 – Green Belts 1988 DoE Booklet – The Green Belts .
1990	Town & Country Planning Act 1990.
1991	The Planning and Compensation Act 1991
1993	DoE Research Programme Booklet 'The Effectiveness of Green Belts'
1995	Revision Planning Policy Guidance. PPG2 – Green Belts 1995
2001	Revision of Planning Policy Guidance. PPG2 – Green Belts 2001. Regional Planning Guidance issued incorporating policies. RPG12 for Yorkshire and the Humber Report by ODPM 'Strategic Gap and green wedge policies in Structure Plans'.
2004	Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004
2008	Regional Spatial Strategy for Yorkshire with Humber
2012	The National Planning Policy Framework revises Green Belt policy
2013	Revocation Order of Yorkshire and the Humber RSS sets out YGB policy
current	Planning Practice Guidance.

- 2.4 The CPRE campaign in turn led to proposals by the Greater London Regional Planning Committee (1935) and Sheffield City Council (1938) to propose green belts. The Green Belt (London & Home Counties) Act 1938 established a statutory green belt for London.
- 2.5 The 1947 Town & Country Planning Act established a legislative framework for planning policy initiatives on a national scale. It required LPAs to produce a local plan and introduced the need for planning permission to authorise development.
- 2.6 A Government publication by the Ministry of Housing & Local Government (MHLG), Circular 42/55, was issued in August 1955 (**Annexe I i page 28**) provided a framework for establishing policy-led green belts and development control policy within such designations.
- 2.7 A subsequent Circular, 50/57, added advice on setting boundaries, inset settlements and those to be washed-over (**Annexe I i page 131**).
- 2.8 In 1962 the MHLG issued a booklet which had the aim to explain the reasons for green belt policy to inform public opinion (**Annexe I ii page ##**). Although the Booklet is not in itself a policy statement, it usefully set out Government thinking behind green belt policy and the purpose of green belt. Additionally, the Booklet set out a description of the purposes of each Provincial Green Belt and circumstances relevant to it.
- 2.9 In 1968 legislation introduced the requirement for County Structure Plans, which served as a process to deliver planning policy on a wider geographical, if not a regional, basis. It also provides a more concise framework for producing local plans.
- 2.10 The 1972 Act consolidated the legislation and produced a clear imperative for providing district-wide local plans.
- 2.11 Circular 14/84 (**Annexe I i page 120**) was issued at a time when many County Structure Plans were in place and the Circular sought to set out the important aspects to be addressed as the boundaries to the general extent of green belts became defined in Local Plans.
- 2.12 Planning Policy Guidance, PPG2 – Green Belts 1988 was published (**Annexe I page 170**). This replaced the previously-issued Ministerial Circulars and redefined the purposes of Green Belt (which from this date onwards is always addressed in Government documents with capital letters).

- 2.13 The Department of the Environment re-issued the Booklet – Green Belts in 1988 but in a revised form. (**Annexe I iv page 173**) The Booklet was published after PPG2 was issued but like PPG2 it stated that the York Green Belt, which had its general extent established in Structure Plan policy in 1980, had an area of 50,000 acres. This is an interesting figure because not only is endorsed by these two Government documents, though never referred to in the plan making process of 1980, it would mean that as the policy set the outer boundary at about a 6-mile radius, then there would not be a tightly drawn inner boundary around the existing urban core.
- 2.14 In the section of the Booklet which describes the Provincial Green Belts, in respect of York (internal page 26) it states the YGB is in good and pleasant farmland proving links with open land running into the City. The Booklet is referred to in the background material that was before the 1991 YGBLP.
- 2.15 The 1990 Town & Country Planning Act sets out a clear division between forward planning and development control and the 1991 P&CA amends the 1990 Act and introduces the Plan-led system approach to development control.
- 2.16 In 1993 the Department of Environment issued a research booklet entitled '*The Effectiveness of Green Belts*' which appraised policy and its impacts. (**Annexe I v page 188**). The Annexe contains extracts as this Booklet which runs to 267 pages but an effort has been made to ensure that the extracts present a balanced coverage of the content and are not cherry picked simply to make the points set out in the Analysis which follows.
- 2.17 In 1995 a revised version of PPG2 is issued (**Annexe I vi page 216**). This adds positive objectives to the role and purpose of green belt, specifically in respect of sustainable development. It was considered to be a reason by the County Council for not adopting the 1991 YGBLP.
- 2.18 In January 2001 the ODPM issued a Main Report on the topic of Strategic Gaps and Green Wedges policy in Structure Plans (**Annexe I vii page 240**). This report had regard to these issues in the context of Green Belt policy. It is submitted that these issues have relevance to the PDLP and, accordingly, the whole document is submitted in evidence. In doing so, it is submitted because of the issues relating to Green Wedges rather than Strategic Gaps but it was considered providing only extracts might be seen as pejorative.
- 2.19 1988 saw the introduction of Regional Planning Guidance which sought to provide overarching policy frameworks for Local Plans. The initial RPGs were issued without public consultation by the Secretary of State, but by 2000, the process included

submission of the draft RPGs to Examination in Public. RPG12 – Yorkshire and the Humber issues in 2001 underwent this process and contained defined policies including on the issue of Green Belts within the Region. This policy is regarded as Primary Policy rather than National Policy. It is included for completeness but has no relevance to the content of the PDLP as its policies were never reflected in any material produced on Green Belt by CoYC.

- 2.20 In 2001 a further version of PPG2 – Green Belts 2001 was issued (**Annexe I viii page 293**). The PPG revision was limited to Park and Ride issues only. All other wording remained unchanged from the 1995 version and so the analysis only addresses the 1995 version.
- 2.21 The PCPA 2004 provides for the revocation of County Structure Plans and introduced statutory regional planning. Local Plans are replaced with Local Development Frameworks and these had to conform with the regional plan. The Act also requires that development plans must positively contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. In this respect the requirement applied at both Regional and District level.
- 2.22 In 2007 the Regional Planning Board produced a draft Regional Spatial Strategy for Yorkshire and the Humber, which went through a consultation process and Examination in Public. The submitted draft contained no policy to replace the Primary Policy in the NYCSP 1995.
- 2.23 The RSS was adopted in May 2008 and the adopted version contained policy relevant to the designation of the general extent of the York Green Belt, replacing policies of the former Structure Plan. This is regarded as Primary Policy rather than National Policy. It also regarded as being of great importance to the soundness of the PDLP as it has to be in general conformity with this policy.
- 2.24 The publication of the National Planning Policy Framework (March 2002) replaced former PPGs and PPSs. The NPPF restated national green belt policy in relation to purposes and designations at paras. 79 – 86. (**Annex I x page 302**).
- 2.25 The RSS is partially revoked and the RSS Revocation Order (**Annexe II xi pages 399**) sets out the policy saved in respect of the York Green Belt. There is an Explanatory Memorandum at (**Annexe II xii page 402**)
- 2.26 In 2014 the National Planning Practice Guidance was launched as a web-based resource. This partly consolidated previously-cancelled advice. (**Annexe I x**).

2.27 It is recognised that a revision of the NPPF has been indicated and that revision will most likely impact on the Planning Practice Guidance and those issues may require some amendment or additions to this Response but that cannot be handled in the timescale of the current Consultation.

### **3.0 Analysis.**

3.1 The green belt to a Garden City as perceived by Ebenezer Howard was not a green belt designed to fulfil the objectives of National Green Belt Policy when it came into being. However, it probably served as a catalyst for this subsequent policy. Ribbon Development may have been another catalyst but that issue was directly addressed in targeted legislation which accounts for the fact that a number of Cities have no green belt, though no doubt suffered from ribbon development in their time.

3.2 The driving force for Green Belt policy was the perceived need for containment of larger urban areas. The largest area was Greater London, but the conurbations of the Midlands, Lancashire and West Yorkshire provided similar scales of urban concentration, but with the added complication of housing more than one focal centre. That in turn indicated other areas with more than one focal centre, but a propensity for coalescence - Bristol and Bath, Nottingham and Derby and the five pottery towns. In a Government Paper issued in 1962 issued by the MHLG under the heading '*the need for green belt*', it stated - '*The answer is that some towns are already far too big for the comfort or the pleasure of the citizens, which others tend to merge with one another and need to be protected from doing so*'. The statement goes on to say, '*the secondary purpose is perhaps better understood and appreciated. It is to provide townsman with the opportunity to escape from the noise, congestion and strain of the city life and to seek recreation in the countryside*'. In a way similar to the American Declaration of Independence the first three purposes of green belt are set out as self-evidence truths and entirely without evidential justification.

3.3 The 1947 Act nationalised development rights and provided Government with a platform to control development including targeting both the quantity and location of new development. The Act opened the way for Green Belt to be addressed through policy rather than legislation as had been the way until then.

3.4 Circular 42/55 was the policy instrument which facilitated the establishment of Green Belts. The purposes of Green Belt were described as restraining growth and preventing coalescence (as subsequently described in the 1962 booklet) together a third purpose described as '*to preserve the special character of a town*'. The

secondary purpose set out in the Booklet (see 3.2 above) was not a defined purpose of Green Belt in the Circular. The Circular continued as the basis for policy until 1988.

3.5 The introduction of County Structure Plans in the 1968 legislation provided the opportunity to establish the principle of a green belt where it had previously been hampered by the fragmented nature of local government administration. Circular 14/84 recognises that situation and provides policy direction for establishing long term boundaries to the general extent of green belt whether established by a sketch plan under Circular 42/55 or policy in a County Structure Plan. The three purposes of green belt set out in Circular 42/55 were ratified in the 1984 Circular.

3.6 It is evident from the 1962 booklet, Green Belts that there were at least three green belts which were (or to be) predicated on the basis of preserving *the special character of the town*. These were in respect of Cambridge, Oxford and York. In respect of each of these locations that document states:

- Oxford – Oxford has become well-known as a city with a dual personality. It is famous both as a university town and a prosperous manufacturing centre. Its character and setting have been impaired by its phenomenal growth during the last forty years and the green belt seeks to prevent it from growing any bigger. The landscape is not outstandingly attractive but it is intimate in scale and gentle in character. Most of it is average to good land used for mixed farming.
- Cambridge – Cambridge has also suffered from being a university and a manufacturing town, though to a lesser extent than Oxford. There is a settled policy to limit its size, together with that of the surrounding villages, to 125,000 population. The green belt is one of the tools used to implement that policy and so help to preserve the city's character. The land is used for arable farming and is mainly flat but some higher ground to the west and the Gog Magog Hills to the south are also included.
- York – A green belt encircling York has been approved in principle. The purpose is to safeguard the special character of the city, **which might be endangered by unrestricted expansion**. The bulk of the land in the green belt is good and pleasant farmland. (my emphasis)

3.7 The same purpose is related to Bath in respect of Bristol and Bath green belts which states :

*'All 3 reasons for the establishment of a green belt apply in this case. The purposes are to restrict the outward expansion of Bristol, to separate Bristol from Bath and to protect the special character of (Bath).'*

- 3.8 That purpose was not attached to the green belt separating Cheltenham and Gloucester. The prevention of coalescence is stated as the purpose. Also, reference is often made to Chester when considering York. However Chester is within North Cheshire Green Belt which is in turn combined with the Merseyside and Greater Manchester Green Belts which address the issue of the concentrations.
- 3.9 It is interesting to note that of the three cities proposed for a green belt to *'preserve the special character'*, Oxford is declared to have reached its expansion limit, Cambridge is prescribed a future limit (the population then being around 95,000), but York is not so limited, but instead a query is raised as to whether it does have a finite capacity at all.
- 3.10 Most green belts became rationalised following the 1968 Act and the establishment of Structure Plans. In general terms, the process of establishing general extents is resolved by the end of the 1980s and many have their boundaries, etc. defined. The last specific advice on boundaries in a Circular was in Circular 14/84.
- 3.11 By the time of the issue of PPG2 1988, most issues around green belt policy have matured. This PPG2 set out that the Government *attached great importance to Green Belt policy* and that position has been maintained ever since. By 1991 the policies are applied through the plan-led system.
- 3.12 PPG2 1988 indicates that some 4,500,000 acres of Green Belt had been approved. A list of areas is set out which included York at 50,000 acres. Paragraphs 4 to 6 are concerned with the purposes of Green Belt and Paras. 7 to 11 relate to their designation, which covers a range of topics – permanence and defining boundaries – but the policy guidance is in general terms. It did, however, very clearly state that once the general extent had been established it should only be altered in exceptional circumstances.
- 3.13 The DoE revised and re-published the Booklet – *The Green Belts* - in 1988 following the publication of PPG2. The format of the Booklet is similar to the 1962 Booklet but the text is revised to reflect historic changes in circumstances and the new statement of National policy. It highlights the introduction of express policy that once the general extent has been established it should be only altered in exceptional circumstances.

- 3.14 The revised text addressing the circumstances of the three Cities with the ‘*special character*’ protection purpose, remain similar to the 1962 statements, in that for Oxford there is a clear statement that it has reached its ultimate size and for Cambridge that there is a settled policy to limit the size and that of its adjacent settlements. Though the specific reference to the cap on population of Cambridge is no longer stated. It is worth setting out the reference to York, which states :
- *York A Green Belt has been approved in principle for many years and a belt whose outer edge is about 6 miles from the York City centre was formally approved in 1980 as part of the NYCSP. Its main purpose is to safeguard the special character of the historic city, **which might be endangered by unrestricted expansion**. (my emphasis) The bulk of the land in the Green Belt is good and pleasant farmland, proving links with open land running into the built-up area of the city.*
- 3.15 The York Green Belt had not progressed in line with the rest of the Country and, although the YGBLP 1991 sought to resolve that position, the plan was not adopted due to issues around the location of a new settlement, the publication of PPG2 1995 and the heralded re-structuring of local government for York delayed adoption. Subsequently when the Structure Plan policy for a new settlement was deleted the 1991 YGBLP process was abandoned.
- 3.16 After the YGBLP Inquiry closed, but before the Inspector reported, the DoE issued a report in 1993 on ‘*The Effectiveness of Green Belts*’. The main purpose of the research was to review the then current effectiveness of green belt policy in England and Scotland and to assess how it might be improved. The report raised a number of useful comments with regard to Green Belts that were preserving the special character of historic towns and related these to the cases of York, Chester, Oxford and Cambridge, but also noted Harrogate and Lancaster. The referenced to Harrogate is interesting because it has Strays and the strays do not form part of the Harrogate Green Belt and are not all connected to it. However, the research pre-dates the significant policy evolution of PPG2 1995.
- 3.17 The analysis of policies relating to historic towns in the research findings suggests that the Green Belt had various rationales, such as keeping open extensive belts of land which form important parts of the setting of the town, protecting gateways and providing a clear definition between town and country, protecting a wider setting of the City (which in the case of Oxford meant keeping open higher ground) and seeking to control the size of a city.
- 3.18 The question of how far policy should be used to limit the size of the Cities, according to notion of environmental capacity, was noted to have gained importance

more recently (from 1991). It is suggested that Oxford may have reached its limit and Chester may be approaching its limit. The text refers specifically to Chester. At this time the Cheshire Structure Plan was under consideration and the County Council, City Council, DoE and English Heritage instructed ARUP and BDP to produce a Methodology for resolving Environmental Capacity in Historic Towns. A Final Report was published in February 1995 but it did not have regard to PPG2 1995 which was published in the January. The terms of PPG2 1995 rendered the Report outdated from the outset. So far as the author of this Response can ascertain no revised methodology has subsequently been produced.

- 3.19 The requirement for an Environmental Capacity Assessment has been promoted by Historic England in the process since 1998 and supported by the author. However, CoYC have never recognised the need to undertake this work and it would need the resolution of a methodology as a first step. This Response submits that the issues arising can be addressed by a proper approach to the analysis of setting and sustainable patterns of development. As is set out subsequently it is submitted that the PDLP and its evidence base fail to provide either of these requirements.
- 3.20 The role of the Green Belt Policy in protecting the character and identifying of historic towns by maintaining important green wedges and open land providing a clear definition between town and country, has a well-established pedigree the research Booklet asserts. Green Belt boundaries around historic towns are particularly tight and the future development requirements have been assessed conservatively. It is less clear how far peripheral restraint is necessarily linked to the more effective conservation of their historic core areas. In the case of Oxford, it noted that vehicle penetration to the historic core had however remained similar for 20-years despite more than a 30% increase in car ownership nationally. This has been achieved by a traffic restraint policy and the introduction of park and ride systems. Peripheral restraint has acted as a backcloth to these more interventionist transport measures.
- 3.21 A recommendation from the Booklet was that Green Belt should be seen as a policy instrument for shaping patterns of urban development at sub-regional and regional scale. Green Belt policy should also by creating contained forms of new development, assist in moving towards more sustainable patterns of urban growth. In respect of preserving the special character of the historic cities, there was a need to consider the relationship between green belt restraint and increasing levels of economic activity, and noting that further research was needed by a comparison of land use, traffic and other policies within a number of historic cities and their surrounding daily journeys to work areas. No further research appears to have been commissioned by the Government.

- 3.22 The Report also considered issues relating to inset villages and safeguarded land which are addressed later in this submission.
- 3.23 During the hiatus following the issue of the Inspector's Report in January 1994 and reorganisation in April 1996, a revised version of PPG2 (1995) was issued. In respect of decisions about setting inner green belt boundaries, the revision of policy was significant. The revised version stated in its preface that the general intention of green belt policy includes its contribution to sustainable development objectives. Paragraph 2.10 sets out specific policy about the location of development within a green belt framework – ***'towards urban areas inside the Green Belt boundary, towards towns and villages inset within the green belt or towards locations beyond the outer boundary'***. (my emphasis). This was a significant re-adjustment of green belt policy and remains in place today – see paragraph 84 NPPF, 2012.
- 3.24 In January 2001 the Department of the Environment published a Research Paper by Consultants relating to the issue of Strategic Gaps, Green Wedges and Green Belt policies in Structure Plans. The aim of the research included assessing the justification for including land in such designations and establishing the objectives of land use within such areas and to what extent these fulfil current green belt purposes as were then set out in PPG2. The research stated that a clear impression from the Study was how far local planners operating strategic gap, rural buffer and green wedge policies consider them an improvement on green belt, they were capable of delivering wider objectives, while giving more flexibility to respond to newly-emphasised priorities of sustainable development. Other matters raised in the research are set out in the following 3 paragraphs.
- 3.25 In the 1996 Lincolnshire Structure Plan Review it had been proposed for a green belt at Lincoln where there existed green wedges. The EiP Panel did not recommend approval of a green belt because the existing policies were regarded as adequate to control development and no examples of a failure of the existing framework were cited by interests favouring green belt designation. The research considered the purposes of green wedge policies. The research found that green wedges helped shape urban growth and that the approach was argued as more sustainable in that it retained the peripheral development option for future housing. It has been the case that green wedges have been used to prevent coalescence between large built-up areas and nearby villages and it has been previously resolved that that was not a purpose of Green Belt policy.
- 3.26 Strategic distinction between Green Belt, being a nationally accepted policy designation, with the same criteria being applied to its definition use, and

readjustment across the country is distinguished from that of green wedges which are seen as local designations and, therefore, not to be dealt with the same approach to application, though the research revealed that that clear-cut distinction was not always applied. Research also noted some essential features of green wedges in that their purpose was to protect important open land to help shape growth of a town/city, protect good quality environmental assets and avoid coalescence. The wedges would penetrate into the town/city and the green wedges within urban areas, might be up to one mile wide with peripheral restraint wedges generally up to 4 miles wide. They had a degree of permanence but were subject to review within each Plan period.

- 3.27 The research also noted that Green Belt status should not be awarded to green wedges because at present Green Belts are largely restraint to policies which operate around the periphery of urban areas, and a change would involve them also penetrating urban areas into separate neighbourhoods.
- 3.28 The replacement of PPGs and PPSs in 2012 by the NPPF in 2012 introduced some amendments to Green Belt policy. In relation to the designation of land for Green Belt there are three points that arise in this respect :
- Retaining land for agriculture or forestry is no longer a land use objective,
  - The future land use objectives proposed by National Policy are no longer immaterial considerations, and
  - New Green Belts should only be established in exceptional circumstances.
- 3.29 [material on the current Planning Practice Guidance]

#### **4.0 An Analysis of Policy at Key Dates.**

- 4.1 The Key Dates which are addressed in this section are those which arise when previous policy has a relevance to the proposals of the PDLP. It is evaluated at that time in the then current framework so that the relevance can be objectively assessed in relation to the PDLP.
- 4.2 It is considered that this exercise is necessary for two reasons :
- Significant elements of the designation of land in the Green Belt proposed in the PDLP is based on previously produced material such as the 1991 YGBLP and/or the 1998 CoYC Local Plan.

- Secondly justifications for approaches in the PDLP are on occasions both in *Proposals* and *Objections/Representations* based on previous plan material or decisions.

4.3 The Key Dates assessed in this Response are at the adoption of the 1980 NYCSP, the date of the Inspector's Report on the YGBLP in January 1994 and the submission in 1998 CoYC Local plan.

4.4 However each of these events is reviewed in subsequent Appendices to identify the '*lessons of history*' and it makes more sense to include this analysis within those exercises. The 1980 NYCSP is reviewed and analysed under Primary Policy at Appendix 3. The outcomes of the YGBLP 1991 process and the CoYC Local Plan 1998 are reviewed and analysed under Secondary Policy at Appendix 4

## 5.0 Conclusions.

5.1 The conclusions are categorised as either '*Assessments*' or '*Conclusions*'. The categories are explained at para. 1.3.9 of the Response at page 4. The Assessments are referred to by a letter **A** and the Conclusions by a letter **C** and both are then sequentially numbered throughout the Appendix section of the Response.

5.2 The Assessments drawn from this Appendix are as follows:

**A.4** Both PPG2 1988 and the Booklet – the Green Belts 1988 state that the general extent of the YGB is 50,000 acres. The Booklet states that this figure derives from the approved Structure Plan Key Diagram. It follows that if the outer boundary is at 6 miles as established in the 1980 NYCSP then the inner boundary would on average be a circle with a radius 3.34 miles from the centre of York. [That calculation makes no allowance for inset settlements but at that date the issue of inset settlements had not been addressed and the Key Diagram showed no settlements within the general extent].

**A.5** Secretaries of State have consistently called in applications on land beyond the urban core but within a 3.34 mile radius of the centre. That fact cannot claim to support an approach that the inner boundary is the existing urban core. It merely represents caution on the part of the SoS, similar to that of the deemed sketch plan status, to protect areas which had the possibility of being necessary to include within the inner boundary when it was resolved.

**A.6** The resolution of the inner boundary does not require an Environmental Capacity Study but does require credible and robust evidence as to whether any land

lying within 3.34 miles of the centre of York needs to be addressed by green belt designation or can be adequately addressed through other policy

5.3 The Conclusions drawn from this Appendix are as follows:

**C.2** References to the area of the general extent of the YGB, from 1990 but particularly in Government Statistics from 1997 are based on returns made by the LPA and as such are based on the extent of proposed designations that have not been adopted.

**C.3** The view of the SoS was never that expansion of the urban core would undermine the safeguarding of the special character as evidenced from the statements in the 1962 and 1988 Booklets. [It is noted that in respect of the two other Cities having the similar single purpose attributed to the Green Belt, that the SoS did indicate limits to expansion].

**C.4** The amended description of the YGB in the 1988 Booklet indicates that there *will be open links between the Green Belt and the (Strays) land running into the inner urban core*. That confirms an approach that does not regard the Green Belt as being tightly drawn around the urban core.

**C.5** The research material set out in the report entitled '*The Effectiveness of Green Belts*' and '*Strategic Gap and Green Wedge policies in Structure Plans: Main Report*' provide a framework for establishing protective policy for the Strays and any connecting links to the Green Belt and state that such policy framework is more appropriate for that purpose than Green Belt Policy. There is no evidence that the LPA has considered this alternative approach and the approach taken is an inappropriate application of Green Belt policy, which should only be applied at the periphery and beyond.

**C.6** Incorporating the Strays and any green wedge links as Green Belt would have to be balanced with reductions in the designation of other land within the general extent of the YGB. That is likely to reduce the protective ring in places below 2 miles which would be counter to the purpose of the YGB to protect the setting of the historic City.

## APPENDIX 3 – PRIMARY POLICY

### 1.0 Overview.

1.1 Primary policy for the purposes of this response is policy which establishes the general extent of the Green Belt and may provide criteria or guidance for establishing Secondary Policy.

1.2 Within the timeframe of Green Belt policy (1955 to date) there are 4 eras for the basis of such policy. These are identified as:

- The Sketch Plan era between 1955 and up-to the adoption of a Structure Plan, which in the case of the YGB was 1980.
- The 1968 TCPA allowed County Councils to establish Structure Plans. It was not until 1974 that a single County Planning Authority covered the YGB area. Plans were formulated in the late 1970's and a Consultation Version was published in 1979. A Structure Plan was adopted in 1980 – The NYCSP 1980. This contained policy both to establish the general extent and provided criteria and guidance for the formulation of Secondary Policy in Local Plans. The 1980 plan was the subject of 2 alterations in 1987 and 1989 and the third alteration resulted in a comprehensive new Structure Plan - the NYCSP 1995.
- When Regional Planning Guidance was issued in the 1990's, it set out strategic policy which was additional to that existing in Structure Plans. The only relevant RPG was RPG 12 (2001) which was issued following consultation and an EiP and contained a Key Diagram.
- The Structure Plan policy was revoked and replaced by Regional Spatial Strategy Policy when it was adopted. In the case of the YGB this was in RSS 2008. Because of Government's decision to revoke all RSS policy, a Partial Revocation Order applied to the YGB in 2013. Total revocation would have removed Primary Policy before any Secondary Policy had been established. Accordingly, the Partial Revocation Order sets out the Primary Policy that is now applicable to the YGB and the PDLP.

1.3 In normal circumstances, there would be no reason to review past revoked policy. However, because the PDLP has proposals for Green Belt designation which have been brought forward from proposals promoted in 1991 and 1998, it is necessary to understand the history. This Response objects to the proposed designation of the

Green Belt and its outer and inner boundaries in particular, because they do not conform with the Primary Policy. The non-conformity arises within the historic attempts to establish the designations and has been compounded by progressive evolutions of the proposals.

1.4 Each era is reviewed below and the evidence base for this Appendix is principally that at **Annexe II**. That material is reviewed firstly and then within the review of each era is an analysis. The analysis in turn leads to the conclusion in Section 5 of this Appendix.

## **2.0 Material at Annexe II**

2.1 The material at **II i** to **II viii** relates to the NYCSP. The items commence with the Report of Survey dated 1979, which was the principal evidence base for the 1980 plan. Items **II ii** to **II iv** cover the consultation or submission version, the Secretary of State's Decision Letter and the adopted version. The main relevance of these items relates to the preconceived views about the inner boundary and the relationship between the proposed and adopted policy on the general extent.

2.2 Items **II v** to **II vii** relate to Alteration No.1. This does not have direct evidence for the YGB but indicates the continued desire of NYCC to use Green Belt Policy as a means of constraining development in rural areas. This issue impacted on the designations in the 1991 YGBLP, the CoY Local Plan 1998 and impacts on the PDLP which carry forward those earlier inappropriate designations.

2.3 Item **II viii** sets out the 1995 version of the Green Belt Primary Policy. This has relevance to the analysis in Appendix 4.

2.4 Item **II ix**, the RPG12 policy, has no great relevance in terms of its policy because it was never related to any formulation of Secondary Policy. However, the Key Diagram, which is **Annexe VIII x** is considered for completeness.

2.5 Items **II x** to **II xii** are of great importance because they address the Primary Policy applicable to the PDLP.

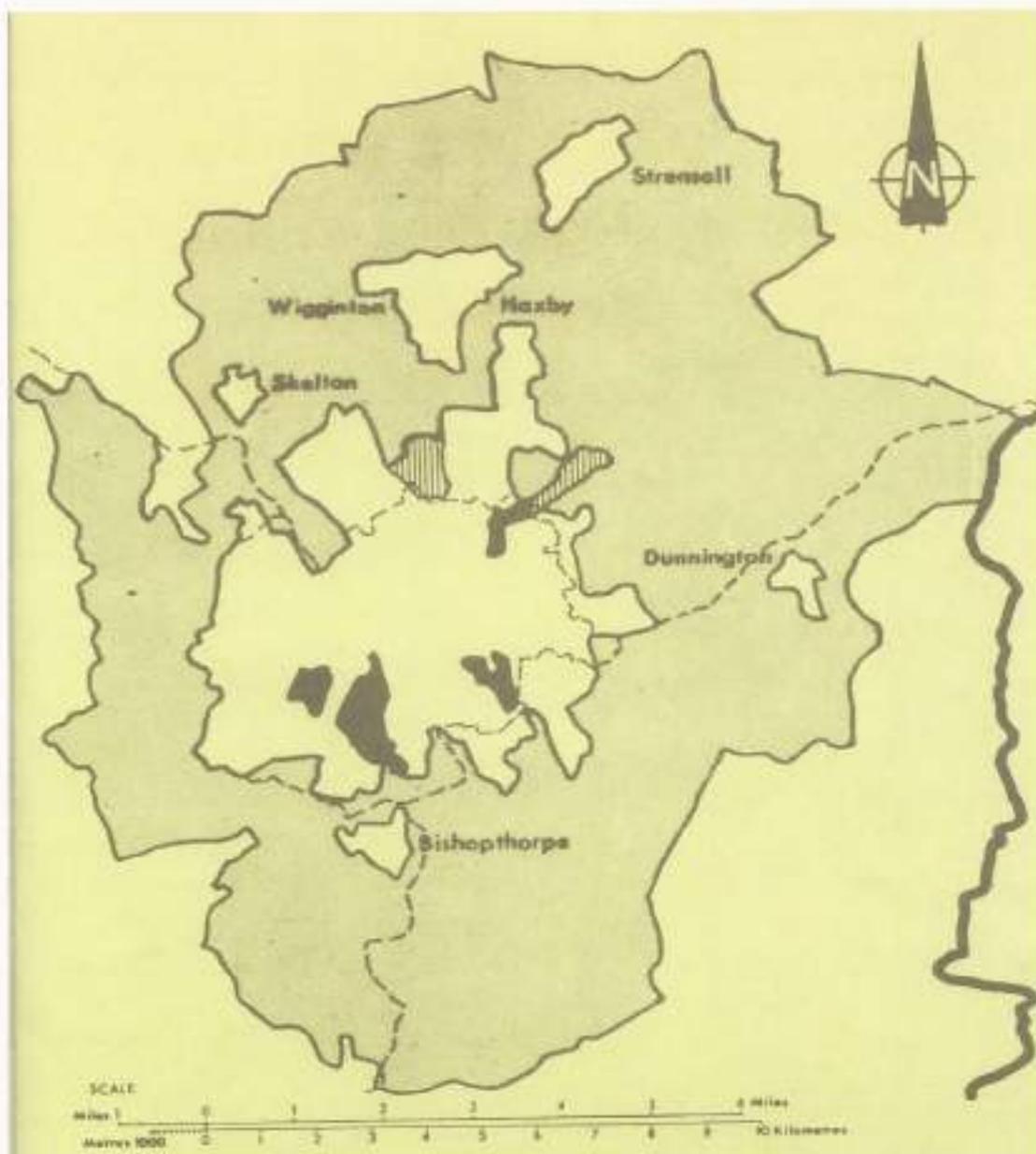
### The NYCSP 1980

2.6 The Report of Survey is a useful document to provide the context for the Primary Policy established in the NYCSP 1980. That policy has relevance to the PDLP because it leads to an approach to both the inner and outer boundaries that remain at the heart of the proposals now contained in the PDLP. Some of those issues relate to

application of the Primary Policy as matters for the PDLP to be in conformity with but they also have reference to the Secondary Policy as it is now set out in the PDLP.

2.7 The text of the Report of Survey which is highlighted for this Response is:

- Internal para. 12.38 (**Annexe II i page 305**) which states the YGB enjoyed sketch plan status. The position was that no sketch plan had been approved but due to the inability of the LPA's concern to produce a comprehensive and agreed proposal, the MHLG had stated it would deem there to be a Sketch Plan for the YGB. However, its geographic location or extent was not specified.
- Despite no sketch plan having been approved, the Report of Surveys has regard to sketch plans that have been prepared such as the Flaxton Town Map (see para 12.82). These sketch plans only address a part of the overall YGB area and some covered areas beyond the area defined in the policy adopted. The fact they have at local level been given status for development control purposes gives them no status in the process of establishing the Primary Policy. That matter was ignored consistently.
- Internal para 12.83 is very relevant to an understanding of the mindset of the County Authority and its subsequent proposals. It describes the purpose of the YGB as being 'to contain urban growth and to protect the special character of a town' (presumably York). Although the Report quotes from the MHLG Booklet the Green Belts at internal para 12.77 relating to another Green Belt, partly within North Yorkshire it does not quote the reference to the YGB from the Booklet. In respect of the YGB the Booklet does not espouse containment of urban growth as either a purpose or a necessity for York.
- Internal para 12.84 states that YGB has been designed as a restrictive collar (but no specific policy even as to the general extent exists!) and at 12.82 states the YGB is contiguous to the Strays (again an assertion which has no factual basis). It is however interesting to note that the Strays are not considered as green belt land at this stage. This is all demonstrated by Fig 12.9 in the Report which inaccurately ascribes Sketch Plan status to a specific area which had never been so defined in an approved plan. The Figure 12.9 is reproduced below.
- Internal paras 12.115 to 12.119 sets out the NYCC philosophical approach to Green Belt Policy namely that it is to constrain and ease development pressures.



-  Green belt ('Sketch Plan' Status)
-  Stray land within York City boundary
-  Stray land outside York City boundary
-  District boundaries
-  County boundary

**YORK AREA GREEN BELT AND STRAYS**

Figure 12.9

A. COOPER KENYON  
 COUNTY PLANNING OFFICER  
 NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL  
 COUNTY HALL  
 NORTHALLERTON

2.8 The Consultation or Submission version of the NYCSP was published in 1979. The strategic imperatives set out at internal paras. 11.26 and 11.27 signify that development constraints are the primary purpose of the Green Belts but some fringe development around York would be necessary to safeguard the character. The proposals for Policy E8, which proposes the general extent of the YGB is that it is at least at 6 miles from the centre but in the Harrogate & Selby district extends to meet the West Riding Green Belt.

2.9 The Decision Letter, following an EiP, issued on behalf of the SoS modifies E8 and adds E8a. The modifications are firstly to curtail the general extent to 6 miles all around York in E8 and provide a framework for Secondary Policy in E8a. In respect of curtailing the general extent the SoS states:

***'The protection afforded by these (modified) policies is more than adequate to safeguard the many amenity areas in North Yorkshire' and he is anxious that the Green Belt concept should not be devalued by indiscriminate application or by using green belt notation where other means of development control in rural area would more appropriately serve the required purpose.***

2.10 The adopted policy in the NYCSP 1980 incorporates these modifications. The Plan states no purpose for the YGB.

2.11 The relevance of the material at **Annexe II v to vii**, is firstly simply to demonstrate that regardless of the SoS reference to not using Green Belt policy to contain development in rural areas, the 1987 NYCSP Alteration No.1. attempts to do just that in respect of the Harrogate Green Belt. That attempt is rejected. Secondly, the new proposals reinforce the restraint to be placed on inset settlements and that proposal is approved.

2.12 The NYCSP Green Belt policies in the 1995 version repeated the 1980 policies as amended by Alteration No.1. These were the applicable Primary Policies at the date of the 1998 CoY Local Plan. The Key Diagram to the 1995 Plan is at **Annexe V v**. The Key Diagram does not give any clarity as to the location of the inner boundary.

2.13 RPG12 2001 was a policy document prepared after consultation and an EiP. It states the general extent of the YGB was established in 1980 and that the outer and inner boundaries remain to be resolved but in doing so it should not create a need for any revision before the end of the plan period (2016). The Key Diagram at **Annexe V vii** appears to be based on the 1991 YGBLP Proposal Maps, although these were never adopted. This shows the inner boundary connecting to and incorporating the Strays.

- 2.14 The RSS material at **Annexe II x page 381** relates to the formulation of the RSS Policy. This considered here by the actual Primary Policy as set out at **Annexe II xi** and the Explanatory Memorandum are considered in detail along with the Key Diagram at **Annexe V ix** in Chapter #. The RSS Key Diagram shows a clear gap between the inner urban core and the inner boundary of the YGB.
- 2.15 The circumstances of the formulation of the RSS Policy are considered worthy of review as they explain what this response regards as shortcomings which need to be addressed in the PDLP. The first page of Annexe II x is an extract from the Government Office statement to the EiP in respect of the York sub area section. Government Office view is that Policy E8 would need to be repeated in RSS to remain extant but that it was not their view that should be undertaken, as greater guidance was required in respect of the inner boundary and the location and scale of development.
- 2.16 There then follows a Report by the author of this Response. This report relates to promoting a policy to retain Primary Policy for the YGB in circumstances where:
- The Regional Planning Board and CoYC were taking a misconceived approach that the NYCSP Policy could be saved. Legislation in the form of the 2004 Act rendered such an approach impossible.
  - GOYH had made the point that new policy was necessary in RSS but did not take the matter any further.
- 2.17 To bring matters to a head, the author in consortium with 2 other consultants, proposed a policy supported by a SA. This was only submitted when the Panel expressed a view it was not going to debate the matter. The author submitted that it was necessary for the SoS to provide a policy and in the absence of an alternative the submitted policy had to be addressed. The following morning the RPB produced a policy for the Panel to consider. It did so despite there being no supporting SA or consultation. (The Panel considered the lack of consultation for the author's policy to be the reason for not considering it). These circumstances are addressed in the Panel Report extracts which with the other related material is at **Annexe II x page 390**.
- 2.18 There was in the event a further consultation on a revised version of the RSS prior to its adoption supported by an SA but the wording remained as produced from the RPB's overnight considerations.

### **3.0 Sketch Plan Proposals.**

- 3.1 A number of sketch plan proposals were formulated between 1955 and 1974 in particular and some were promoted by one of the three County Councils with areas within the Greater York Area and some were prepared by second tier authorities such as the Flaxton Town Council.
- 3.2 None of the proposals were ever approved by the Minister because his position consistently was that only a comprehensive proposal agreed by all the interested authorities would be considered. As has been described in Appendix 1 the basis for these sketch plan proposals was more often than not about containing the development pressures emanating from York rather than anything to do with safeguarding York's special character. The proposals also covered areas outside a 6-mile radius.
- 3.3 Unfortunately, these plans were considered by the NYCC as material considerations when it both drew up the proposals for the 1980 NYCSP (which proposed Primary Policy) and subsequently in the 1991 YGBLP (which proposed Secondary Policy). This is evidenced by the reference to Figure 12.9 in the Report of Surveys (the underpinning evidence base for the NYCSP) and the Consultation Maps issued in December 1990 (**Annexe V i**) which again have a baseline of unapproved sketch plans.
- 3.4 The specific concerns about the sketch plans is that they were not predicated on the purpose of the YGB as now defined. They were not prepared in a manner constrained by the outer boundary being limited to a distance of about 6 miles from the centre of York. It is difficult to rationalise why these plans had any consideration in the process of 1980 and 1991. It may be explained by the fact the higher-tier authority was seeking to pander to the second-tier authorities but that does not explain why NYCC saw fit to consider the sketch plans of the former County Councils for East and West Riding of any relevance.
- 3.5 Having established an adopted policy in 1980, it becomes even more difficult to find any justification for the extent to which the 1991 YGBLP proposals referred to the sketch plans as it did in the Consultation Plans. It is apparent merely from viewing the Consultation Plans (**Annexe V i**) and the Proposal Maps for the YGBLP 1991 (**Annexe V iii**) that the outer boundary was not predicated on the basis of a ring having a radius of 6 miles from the centre of York.

3.6 It is even more amazing to note the CoY LP 1998 also in its introduction at internal page (ii) (**Annexe III ix page 584**) also acknowledge these sketch plans.

#### **4.0 The NYCSP Policy.**

4.1 The first form of Primary Policy was that set out in the NYCSP 1980.

4.2 It is considered useful to bear in mind the following factors about this suite of policies on Green Belt:

- They were prepared under National Policy set out in Circular 42/55.
- No purpose or purposes is/are ascribed to the YGB in the policies.
- The original consultation version proposed green belt beyond 6 miles from the centre of York.
- The policies were subject to the approval of the Secretary of State.
- The policies were not exclusively related to the YGB.

4.4 Thus the modifications as they affected Policy E8 were to the general extent of the YGB and the addition of E8a was guidance on establishing boundaries that applied to all Green Belts in North Yorkshire. However, in respect of the guidance on boundaries the concern about coalescence was related to coalescence between inset settlements not between the urban core and adjacent settlements. The author of this Response is aware that the Primary Policy for Cambridge specifically states as a purpose that there shall be no coalescence with inset settlements and the urban core. No such Primary Policy purpose has even been mooted for the YGB.

4.5 It is all the more surprising that arguments of development pressure constraint were used as a reason for expanding the YGB beyond 6 miles to enclose Wheldrake and Escrick in the 1991 YGBLP. That issue is reviewed in greater detail at Appendix 4.

4.6 Alteration No. 1 provides reinforcement to the objective that the inset settlements should not expand into the Green Belt.

#### **5.0 Regional Policy.**

5.1 Regional policy first emerged in the form of Regional Planning Guidance issued by the SoS.

- 5.2 By 2001 the SoS promoted RPG12, Regional Planning Guidance for Yorkshire & the Humber, through a process which included public consultation and an EiP. RPG 12 2001 contained policies which ranked alongside those of Structure Plans.
- 5.3 This version of RPG included a Key Diagram which replicated the general extent of the YGB as proposed in the 1991 YGBLP and 1998 CoYLP.
- 5.4 After 2004 Regional Spatial Strategies were to replace Structure Plans. The RSS for Yorkshire & the Humber contained at its submission stage no policies to preserve the general extent of the YGB as contained in the NYCSP 1995 (**Annexe II viii page 370**) or at all.
- 5.5 This position was promoted by the RPB and CoYC, but GOYH had indicated new policy was necessary and that mere replacement of the NYCSP policy would not be adequate (**Annexe II x page 381**). However, GOYH took the matter no further than a recommendation and accordingly the author of this Response and two other senior local Planning Consultants promoted a policy.
- 5.6 What followed is indicated at **Annexe II x page 382**). The outcome was that a policy was produced overnight by the RPB in conjunction with GOYH. The hurried process resulted in the policy being less comprehensive than those in the NYCSP but for the first time setting out a specific and prescribed purpose for the YGB and a Key Diagram which indicated its general extent.
- 5.7 This policy and the Key Diagram had to be saved when Spatial Strategies were being revoked nationally because CoYC had subsequently failed to produce a Local Plan.

## 6.0 Conclusions.

- 6.1 The conclusions are categorised as either '*Assessments*' or '*Conclusions*'. The categories are explained at para. 1.3.9 of the Response at page 4. The Assessments are referred to by a letter **A** and the Conclusions by a letter **C** and both are then sequentially numbered throughout the Appendix section of the Response.
- 6.2 The Assessments drawn from the Appendix are as follows:

**A.7** There is an assertion in the Report of Surveys of the 1980 NYCSP, that the inner boundary would be tightly drawn to the urban core of York but that concept:

- Is not evidenced based, and

- Is not reflected in the policy wording of the subsequently adopted Plan or its justification.

**A.8** Urban containment is considered to be a purpose of the YGB from 1979 to 2008 and appears to be regarded in priority to safeguard the special character in the mindset of Planning Authorities formulating Primary Policy.

**A.9** The NYCC as promoting Authority for Primary Policy appears to incorporate the ambitions of second-tier authorities in the process including their unapproved sketch plans.

6.3 The conclusions drawn from this Appendix are as follows:

**C.7** Sketch Plan proposals, prepared both by County Authorities and second-tier Districts are given status as Sketch Plan areas of Green Belt even though never approved.

**C.8** The 6-mile radius is the limit of the general extent and it should not be extended to contain development pressures in rural areas beyond that distance as was proposed in earlier sketch plans. To do so would devalue Green Belt policy nationally.

**C.9** That growth of inset settlements should be tightly constrained and that policy should be contained within the Primary Policy but there is no policy constraint to contradict the proposals of the NPPF that growth from the inner boundary might extent to adjacent inset settlements.

**C.10** Where the Primary Policy lacks guidance or criteria which could assist the PDLP. Some guidance or criteria can be drawn from the earlier NYCSP policy on inset settlements as that was inserted by the SoS and in PPG2 1995 as that was directed at establishing Secondary Policy whereas the NPPF appears to assume that has happened.

**C.11** Following the 1995 PPG2 there were two fundamental policy requirements for resolving the boundaries of the general extent and these still apply in NPPF policy, namely :

- That the general extent should not be beyond 6 miles radius unless exceptional circumstances were established to revise the boundary and constraint of rural development pressure was and is not such a circumstance, and
- The requirements of promoting sustainable patterns development are by directing development to areas within the inner boundary and if necessary towards adjacent inset settlements.

## APPENDIX 4 – SECONDARY POLICY

### 1.0 Overview.

- 1.1 This Appendix reviews the two previous attempts to resolve Secondary Policy for the YGB. These key events are :
- The 1991 YGBLP process, and
  - The 1998 CoYLP process.
- 1.2 The frameworks of both National and Primary policy are different both from each other and from that which now applies. Because this Response is based on the fact that the Green Belt Proposals of the PDLP are essential those that were created for the 1991 process and then used as a baseline for the 1998 process, reviewing these processes is necessary to establish whether that is an appropriate baseline for the PDLP. The common baseline assertion is identified by a comparison of the boundaries. The outer boundary shown on the 1998 Proposal Plans and the PDLP Proposal plans are almost identical but differ from the 1991 plans as this shows the full extent of the proposed Green Belt whereas the 1998 and PDLP Proposal Maps only show boundaries within the District boundaries.
- 1.3 After the NYCSP 1980 had established the general extent of the YGB, a problem existed in that the SoS still required in respect of the outer boundary a comprehensive and agreed solution. At this time the York City Council was a second-tier authority in NYCC but remained a small geographical area which hardly exceeded the limits of the urban core. Thus, the outer boundaries were divided between Ryedale, Selby, Harrogate and Hambelton. This presented a further problem as to which authority had what portion of responsibility for delivering the development land requirements.
- 1.4 In 1980 the SoS had rejected the concept of a Greater York Area to resolve these issues. In 1987 in the NYCSP Alternation No.1 process, the SoS accepted an approach based on a Greater York Area. This provided NYCC with a platform to resolve the Secondary Policy for the YGB and to that end it promoted the Greater York Study. A major purpose of the GYS was to obtain agreement between the various second-tier authorities affected by the consequential proposals of establishing the Secondary Policy for the YGB.
- 1.5 The GYS was agreed in 1990 and provided the policy framework for NYCC to promote the YGBLP within the GYA. It was not evidenced based. It represented an agreed policy basis particularly for allocating a share of development land for each authority to deliver within the GYA.

- 1.6 The GYS is at **Annexe III ii** and a Plan prepared in conjunction with both the GYS and the proposed YGBLP is at **Annexe V ii**.
- 1.7 Taken together, the SoS's approval of a Local Plan Area of the GYA incorporating parts of several Districts and the NYCC's proposal to promote a Local Plan to resolve the distribution of development needs, were aimed at delivering Secondary Policy for the YGB as established in the 1980 NYCSP. This seemed to present a clear and satisfactory means of resolving the impasse which had arisen after 1980.
- 1.8 At the end of the 1991 YGBLP process the Plan was not adopted but had gone through Public Inquiry and the delivery of the Inspector's Report. It was used both as evidenced and as a baseline for the subsequent 1998 CoYCLP. That plan has evolved into the policies and proposals now presented in the PDLP.
- 1.9 It is the submission of this Response that, for reasons which are set out below, both the 1991 and the 1998 Local Plans produced flawed and unreliable outcomes which made them an unsound basis for establishing any future Proposals or Policy. These outcomes remain in place in the PDLP and are of such magnitude that they render the PDLP unsound as a whole document. The most relevant flaws are the proposals in the PDLP for an outer boundary which extends significantly in excess of 6-miles from the centre of York and the tight inner boundary. The inner boundary is incorrectly predicated and if the approach was properly addressed there would be sufficient land available within the inner boundary to deliver the requirements of the Plan and safeguarded land for the period beyond without impacting upon the openness of the Green Belt.
- 1.10 It is therefore the framework of this Appendix on Secondary Policy to consider separately these two processes. The 1991 YGBLP process review and analysis is based on the material at **Annexe III I to viii** and that for the CoYCLP 1998 at **Annexe III ix to xv**.
- 2.0 Material at Annexe III i to viii.**
- 2.1 This review and analysis commences with the adoption of the NYCSP in 1980 and leads through to 1996 when the CoYC is created as a unitary authority.
- 2.2 The first issue which is addressed are the events leading up to and including the completion of the GYS in 1990.
- 2.3 NYCC issued a Discussion Paper in 1981 (**Annexe III i, page 408**). This followed the adoption of the Primary Policy. It states as internal page 9 last paragraph ***'at present the green belt extends 8 miles from the centre of York.'*** This statement is

incomprehensible based on the fact that the recently adopted Primary Policy as modified by the SoS sets it at 6 miles.

- 2.4 However, the explanation might be found in the text which is headed '*Defining the Outer Boundary*' from internal page 5 first para., which express concerns about development pressures adjacent but beyond the Outer Boundary and at internal page 9 last para. which refer to Escrick and Wheldrake. It becomes more evident as matters proceed that NYCC perceive the Green Belt to be that which is covered by a series of unadopted sketch plan proposals rather than regard those as irrelevant in light of the adopted policy of the NYCSP 1980.
- 2.5 The GYS (**Annexe III ii page 423**) is intended to relate to areas of both the GYA and the YGB. It is entirely unclear how the GYA became so defined other than the fact its outer boundaries are based on Parish boundaries as shown on the front cover page (**Annexe III ii page #**). There is a plan at **Annexe VII ii** that indicates a boundary to the GYA which appears to replicate the boundary on the front cover of the GYS. This Plan also shows a Green Belt boundary. That Green Belt Boundary appears to be in line with that shown at Fig. 3 in the GYS (**Annexe III ii page #**). The YGB boundary as shown on that Plan extends beyond the GYA in places and seems not to relate to a radius of 6-miles from the centre of York.
- 2.6 The purpose of the GYS was to consider how development need and the requirement for the YGB could be accommodated geographically. So why was the GYS area less than the proposed YGB proposed. The explanation appears to be the GYS is not an evidence base but a statement of intended policy. That policy is something resolved in negotiations between the LPA's involved.
- 2.7 The GYS states at internal page 3 'The Green Belt was established some 30 years ago.' That would be 1960 not 1980. At para. 14 on internal page 6 it states *prior to 1974 each County Authority had defined a Green Belt*. Whilst they may have drawn up a Sketch Plan none were ever approved so the word defined does not seem fitting.
- 2.8 The GYS set out proposals for a new settlement beyond the Green Belt to accommodate a significant element of the forecast development need.
- 2.9 In setting out the 'Policy Framework' the mention of the NYCSP is to a proposal to restrain the pace of development. It does not focus on the outer boundary being at 6-mile radius on the safeguarding of special character. It refers to the 1988 DoE Booklet and the single stated purpose but does not refer to the area specified in that Booklet of 50,000 acres (20234 ha.) for the general extent or the same figure set out in PPG2 1988.

- 2.10 The YGBLP deposit version was dated 1991 (**Annexe III iii page 509**). This sets the policy framework but only at page 8 does it refer to the outer edge being at 6-miles from the centre. It makes no statement as to why that radius is exceeded in certain areas of the overall area of the belt thereby proposed but states the development strategy includes:
- To allow only limited peripheral development around the built-up area in locations which do not conflict with the Green Belt objectives
  - To limit development in the villages surrounding the City
  - To accommodate much of the long-term development requirement in a new settlement
  - To maintain a relatively tight Green Belt around the existing build up area
  - To obviate the need for substantial area of white-land to be identified around the edge of the built-up area.
- 2.11 These objectives are stated to arise from the GYS and that the LPA's involved have formally adopted the study. Here again whilst the boundaries remain to be resolved in policy the underpinning document uses the word maintain, which implies the work is based on an existing boundary that has been approved. Overall these objectives are not related to an evidence base and do not arise from one.
- 2.12 The YGBLP does provide criteria for defining boundaries and policy for inset settlements as well as a suite of inset maps at a scale which identified existing land use boundaries.
- 2.13 Evidence to support the policy proposals was not produced until after the YGBLP had been submitted and a Public Inquiry fixed. Two of these documents are produced because they have relevance to the PDLP proposals. Those not produced are considered to relate to historic issues which no longer have value such as development land requirement a distribution evidence.
- 2.14 At **Annexe III iv page 549** is a Position Statement submitted by NYCC regarding the status of the GYS. Attached to this document is correspondence with Government Office. Attention is drawn to the DoE letter of the 22.05.1991. At para. 6 is expressed a concern about the tightness of the inner boundary.

- 2.15 A Proof of Evidence relating to the Inner Boundary for NYCC is at **Annexe III v page 560**. This makes it clear that the factors which resolved the plan proposals on the Inner Boundary were not based on the purpose as now set out in Primary Policy. Also, the position is very much stated as the County Council's position not that of the York City Council.
- 2.16 The Inspector's Report (**Annexe III iv page 567 [Note: the electronic version contains a glitch. The pages which should follow 567 do actually follow after 679]** ) considers objections and at internal page 9 para A7.14 York City Council indicates a tight inner boundary is not essential to '*preserving the character.*'
- 2.17 The YGBLP, public scrutiny process was by way of Public Inquiry to consider the objections. That process was narrower than the EiP process applicable to the PDLP as the Inspector had to resolve the objections not assess the soundness.
- 2.18 What can be gained from the Inspector's Report is that he did not make his recommendations on the basis that a new settlement would be delivered nor did he make it having regard to issues of sustainable patterns of development. The latter did not arise in National Policy until PPG2 1995.
- 2.19 The Inspector's own visual assessment was significantly influenced by views arising around the recently opened ring road. The circumstances today are material different as mature boundary hedging and landscaping have removed a significant number of the distant views of the Minster, to which the Inspector attached weight.
- 2.20 The Inspector's concerns about the underlying evidence base as expressed at para. A7.2 and A7.3. These would be issues which in today's framework would raise concerns about soundness but that was not an issue in the Public Inquiry at that time.
- 2.21 At **Annexe III vii** is an extract of the Panel Report for Alteration No.3 1994 relating to the proposed new settlement. Internal para 2.1.02 notes that the York City Council no longer supported the proposal. At **Annexe III viii page 572** is a Further Proposed Modification 1995, which was to delete the new settlement policy from the Structure Plan.

### **3.0 Analysis of the 1991 process**

- 3.1 The 1991 YGBLP was based on agreement between the interested LPA's in line with a strategy agreed in the GYS. The GYS also involved the creation of new settlement outside the YGB. Their linked requirement was to be addressed through a third alteration to the 1980 NYCSP which in the end took the form of the 1995 NYCSP.

3.2 Throughout the YGBLP process the GYS strategy applied. That strategy had the following objectives:

- to coordinate the distribution of development needs generated by the GYA.
- to resolve the basis for the Secondary Policy within a process which involved the promotion of both the YGBLP and Alternation No.3 to the NYCSP.
- to provide a new settlement beyond the YGB that would facilitate a tight inner boundary.

3.3 This strategy was not evidenced based but represented a policy framework which the interested LPA's were prepared to support. Having agreed the strategy in February 1990 the GYS was the subject of a public consultation in March/April 1990.

3.4 Para. 3.18 of the submission YGBLP September 1991 stated that the public consultation generally endorsed the strategy and then defined elements of the strategy objectives. These included:

- To allow only limited peripheral growth around the urban core of York.
- That the Green Belt had several purposes (described as objectives)
- To maintain a relatively tight Green Belt around the urban core
- To dispense with the need for safeguarded land.

3.5 The YGBLP thus goes on to state that these (and other) strategy objectives fully reflect the proposed Green Belts boundaries (internal para. 3.19) and that the Structure Plan will be allowed to establish a new settlement (internal para.3.20)

3.6 Despite there being Primary Policy in place which established the general extent of the YGB, the YGBLP states at internal para 5.4 in respect of the outer boundary the starting point is the Sketch Plan boundaries to which the NYCC has been working. That approach can be seen and understood from the Consultation Version Proposal Maps at **Appendix V i** . These 2 plans indicate a 6-mile radius and the amalgamated area of the Sketch Plan that had been previously proposed. It also indicated areas t for addition and removal to establish proposed Green Belt boundaries. It is clear

that the approach only paid token approach to the Primary Policy that the radius would be a 6-mile radius.

- 3.7 The Sketch Plan area was produced as a single area to achieve a defined purpose, it is an amalgam of Sketch Plans which were not conceived for a common purpose. In the case of Wheldrake the inclusion of that village was undertaken, despite it being over 6-mile from the centre of York but rather because it would otherwise be just beyond the outer boundary. The designation was therefore extended to include it as a means of constraining development pressure in a rural area. The very reason the SoS had stated would undermine the value of the Green Belt policy nationally.
- 3.8 No argument was presented at the Public Inquiry to challenge Green Belt designations beyond 6-miles.
- 3.9 It is clear that the 1991 YGBLP could have been legally challenged on the basis that it failed to conform with the Primary Policy as it extended the outer boundary beyond 6-miles, but the Plan was never adopted and therefore could not be challenged. NYCC resolved not to adopt the Plan because it had subsequently decided to abandon the concept of new settlement beyond the green belt and PPG2 1995 had introduced major changes to Green Belt Policy. So why did CoYC consider the 1991 Plan was a baseline for its 1998 Plan. That point is considered further below, but more importantly the next paragraph considers why those proposals are an inappropriate baseline for the PDLP.
- 3.10 The YGBLP 1991 is an entirely unsuitable base line or basis for resolving Secondary Policy and proposals in the PDLP because of the following reasons:
- It is not evidence-based policy. It is beyond credibility to consider that an objective evidence base would arrive now at a result similar to that achieved by a committee of officers from disparate District Councils reaching a conclusion upon a strategic policy framework with a time horizon that was 12 years ago.
  - The purposes regarded as applicable to the 1991 are not A single purpose now set down in the Primary Policy. The single purpose which now applies is in any event different from any purpose defined in the NPPF or earlier PPGs or Circulars.
  - The policy framework for Green Belt for the 1991 Plan was that set out in Circular 42/55 not that which is now applicable.

- The tight inner boundary was not related to the setting of character of the city but the proposal for a new settlement beyond the YGB and a pre-conceived view where it might be. The Key Diagram does not depict a tight boundary and previous Government statements in PPG2 1988 and the Booklet, The Green Belts 1988, published after Primary Policy had been adopted indicate factors, such as the area of the general extent, that there was no clear-cut limit to expansion and there may be open space connections into the urban core, that also support a view that the inner boundary is not tightly drawn.
- It sought to include land penetrating into the City (the Strays and more) whereas current policy indicates that safeguarding such areas should be addresses other than by Green Belt policy.
- The proposal to expand the area beyond 50,000 acres (20,234 ha.) and beyond a 6-mile radius is a proposal to alter the general extent and requires justification by exceptional circumstances of which constraining development is not one. This issue relates to both the outer and inner boundary proposals.

3.11 The one useful detail that can be taken from the historical Primary and Secondary policy is that the Secondary Policy set out criteria or a framework for defining boundaries inner, outer and inset and evidence upon which the status of settlements within the Green Belt can be resolved. The PDLP fails to address these issues.

#### 4.0 **Material at Annexe III ix to xv**

4.1 This material relates to the CoYLP process which covers the period from the local government restructuring in 1996 to 2005 when the CoYC Local Plan process, commencing in 1998 was abandoned.

4.2 There are three issues relevant to the PDLP to be taken from this era. They are:

- that the 1998 Local Plan incorporated the 1991 YGBLP proposals for the Green Belt boundaries as its baseline,
- that the 1998 Local Plan like the 1991 Plan contained no proposal for safeguarded land, and
- that in consequence of another fatal flaw in the 1998 Plan proposals (that of a proposed short-term Green Belt) the substance of the 1998 Plan did

not undergo any meaningful public scrutiny, despite there being at the point of its abandonment around 17,000 unresolved objections.

- 4.3 In respect of the Green Belt proposals in the PDLP, it is apparent from a comparison of the 1998 Proposal Plans and the PDLP Proposal Plans that concept for the outer and inner boundaries is very similar. These in turn are similar to the Proposals of the 1991 YGBLP, except that the outer boundary is shown in part as being limited to the District boundary of CoYC in the 1998 and PDLPs Proposal Plans. The actual outer boundary is beyond the District Boundary in an adjoining Districts for a significant part of the length both in the 1991 Plan and in the adopted Local Plans of adjoining LPAs.
- 4.4 Prior to 2004 the SoS had insisted this outer boundary be dealt with by a comprehensive and agreed solution from all the interested LPA's. After 2004 Local Plans were addressed by Inspectors and their decisions were binding. However, the Plan Inspector was not given any framework by the Secretary of State rather it was to be provided by an RSS which would be approved by the SoS. The consequence was that Local Plans were approved in Hambelton, Ryedale, Selby and Harrogate that resolved some part of the outer boundary. These processes were not achieved on the basis of a comprehensive and agreed proposal because all the authorities relied on the Proposals in the 1991 YGBLP despite it never having been adopted and specifically rejected by the County Authority after the issue of PPGL 1995 and the abandonment of the new settlement proposals.
- 4.5 There was little incentive for any creative thinking by the adjoining LPA's as the areas by and large represented areas of open countryside with some inset rural villages. These areas were of little consequence to the adjoining LPA's, who would most likely have adopted development restraint policies in absence of the area being Green Belt. None of the LPA's made an assessment relating to the purpose of the Green Belt as set out in RSS.
- 4.6 The 1998 CoYLP sets out in its introduction reference to the Flaxton Town Map (1983) and the County Development Maps of both the North 1955 and the East Riding 1960. It is not clear why these were thought to be of relevance to District wide planning after the restructuring. However, the Introduction to the Plan states that other plans have been prepared subsequently and their policies and proposals will be carried forward. This list included the 1991 YGBLP.
- 4.7 Later on in the Introduction, the LPA indicates that the NYCSP 1995 and '*existing local*' Plans form part of the context of the 1998 CoYLP. This statement does not make clear whether the unadopted 1991 YGBLP, which by then the NYCC had

resolved not to adopt, was to be regarded as essential context. However, Appendix J to the Plan set out policies/proposals which had been considered at a Local Plan Inquiry. This included 92 items out of 109 being derived from the 1991 YGBLP. These items the LPA considered were not to be the subject of public scrutiny in the 1998 plan process. That fact confirms the 1998 Plan regarded the 1991 Plan as essential context.

4.8 It is clear from a comparison of the Plans and the statement at internal para 1.17 (**Annexe III ix page 576**) that the boundaries are essentially those of the 1991 Plan.

4.9 There are two specific aspects of Green Belt proposals that are of significance

- that the CoYC's proposal in 1998 was for a short-term Green Belt, and
- that it described any adjustments to the boundaries as '*a review of the Green Belt*'.

4.10 The concept of a short term Green Belt was the downfall for the 1998 Plan. At **Annexe III x to xiv** are various documents issued by the Inspector. In a nutshell the Inspector accepted the author's proposal to address the Green Belt procedural issue (it being proposed as short term) through a Round Table Process.

4.11 In the course of this process which had Round Table meetings between December 1999 and January 2003, the CoYC sought to 'substantially' amend the Plan through '*in course of Inquiry changes*'. A third and then a fourth version were produced by 2004, which amongst other things extended the time horizon of the Plan by 5 more years. However, there was no substantive alteration to the location of the boundaries or any introduction of safeguarded land.

4.12 There is no indication that the CoYC viewed the issue of PPG2 1995 as a reason to take a fresh look at the definition of the outer and inner boundaries but stuck determinedly to the 1991 boundary even though the NYCC has resolved to abandon this Plan due, amongst other reasons, to the publication of PPG2 1995.

4.13 The author criticised the '*review*' approach of the LPA and suggested the LPA started from a clean sheet. Despite the Council accepting *review* was not the appropriate term, they nevertheless subsequently used it repeatedly in their 2004 revisions of the Plan. At **Annexe III xv** is the 4th set of changes version, with the third set of change (2002) being highlighted yellow and the 4th set (2004) highlighted pink.

## 5.0 Analysis of the 1998 process.

- 5.1 The 1998 CoYLP was based in respect of Green Belt proposals for inner and outer boundaries, settlement status and inset boundaries on the 1991 YGBLP with the exception of:
- some lengths of the outer boundary which were restricted to the District Boundary where the 1991 Plan had extended these lengths of the outer boundary into neighboring Districts, and
  - Where they were adjusted to facilitate some proposed development allocations.
- 5.2 No provisions for safeguarded land were made in the 1998 edition of the Plan because it was intended to be a short-term proposal to be reviewed by 2006. In the subsequent changes which extended the plan period to provide a long term Green Belt no safeguarded land was proposed. The 1991 Plan had not provided for safeguarded land on the basis of the creation of a new settlement but that did not apply to the 1998 Plan.
- 5.3 In the subsequent and final iteration of the Plan in 2004 the plan period had a horizon of 2011. Chapter 1 internal para. 1.28 stated the Green Belt proposals aimed to establish boundaries that would last 20 years (**Annexe III xv page 659**). Presumably with this plan being subject of a consultation in 2004 the expression '20 years' would relate to a horizon of 2024 at a minimum and 2025 as a realistic likely horizon. This view taken by the LPA is despite allocating land to address needs to 2011 (at that time a forward period of 7 years maximum) it did not require to identify any safeguarded land. This was because the LPA presumably considered the provisions made then would last until 2024 (a period of 13 years beyond the proposed plan period). It is considered that such a stance is without credibility, however the Plan was never subject to public scrutiny.
- 5.4 The LPA continued to address the process of resolving Secondary Policy as a 'review' which is a process that assumes Secondary Policy already exists.
- 5.5 The CoYLP 1998 did not seek to set out a rationale for resolving the outer or inner boundaries or why settlements would be inset or washed over it merely rested the case on the fact the 1991 YGBLP had gone through Public Inquiry and claimed that these matters were no longer up for debate. That issue was never debated but once the plan horizon was moved from 2006 to 2011, it was no longer a credible position for the LPA to adopt. That is so even if it was not having regard to the material change in National Policy through PPG2 1995 and the fact the 1991 YGBLP was

abandoned by its promoter the NYCC in 1995 but as those matters were pertinent then the Plan is entirely without credibility. It was unsound.

## **6.0 Conclusions**

6.1 The conclusions are categorised as either '*Assessments*' or '*Conclusions*'. The categories are explained at para. 1.3.9 of the Response at page 4. The Assessments are referred to by a letter **A** and the Conclusions by a letter **C** and both are then sequentially numbered throughout the Appendix section of the Response.

6.2 Assessment drawn from the Appendix are as follows:

**A.10** The 1991 YGBLP was based upon unapproved sketch plans that were not formulated against the single purpose for the YGB that now applies.

**A.11** If it is the case that the PDLP is based upon the 1991 and/or the 1998 Local Plans in respect of the Green Belt Proposals, then per se it must also be fundamentally flawed. If it is not based on those Plans:

- Where there is evidence base that justifies the proposed boundaries, and
- Where is the justification (in terms of exceptional circumstances) for existing beyond a 6-mile radius, and
- The proposing a tight inner boundary which expands the Green Belt areas beyond that resolved in the general extent as expressed in the Key Diagram to RSS and the land area of the general extent set out in PPG2 1998 and the Booklet- The Green Belts.

**A.12** It is considered that the Key Diagram and or the Proposal Maps should indicate the full extent of the outer boundary of the YGB as would be established and the text should define the total area of the YGB so created.

6.3 The conclusions drawn from this Appendix are as follows:

**C.12** The 1991 YGBLP was fundamentally flawed for the reasons set out in para. 3.10 above. It cannot provide a credible baseline for the Green Belt proposals of the PDLP.

- C.13** The 1991 YGBLP was not an evidence-based plan, it was conceived on the basis of a strategy agreeable to a number of LPA's with an interest in the GYA. It can be characterised as a political deal which was subsequently supported by evidence. The evidence was to support the strategy not that the strategy was based on the evidence.
- C.14** The 1998 CoYLP was based upon the Green Belt proposals of the 1991 YGBLP and as such inherited the flaws of that Plan and in addition did not adjust for the change in National Policy in PPG2 1995 which required Green Belt to support sustainable patterns of development.
- C.15** The modern statistics (i.e. from 1991) are unreliable as the area of the general extent because they are based on returns made by the LPA's, who have their returns on figures derived from the 1991 unadopted proposals. Those figures are significantly in excess of 50,000 acres (20234 ha) at 27940 ha (69041 acres).

## APPENDIX 5 – THE LPA’S PREPARATIONS

### 1.0 Overview.

- 1.1 This Appendix addresses the public record of work undertaken by the LPA in connection with its preparations for a Local Plan. It covers a period from 1999 when the LPA became aware that its 1998 CoYLP was flawed to the issue of the PDLP.
- 1.2 In consequence of the first meeting of the GBRT in December 1999, the Inspector issued his note of the proceedings in January 2000. The LPA had accepted the deficiency of their submitted Plan and proposed a review of the Green Belt. Whilst that statement may well have conveyed to many participants that the LPA were going to undertake a wholesale review, it is with hindsight clear that the word ‘review’ was to the LPA a process of adjusting the Green Belt that they considered existed and which was demonstrated on the 1998 Proposal Maps (**Annexe V #**). The LPA’s understanding does not appear to be that there was Primary Policy or within its terms they had to resolve the outer and inner boundaries etc. Whilst the Primary Policy required the outer Boundary to be at a 6-mile radius and provided no stipulation as to the inner boundary, the LPA appears to have held the belief that the 1991 Plan Proposals had resolved these boundaries.
- 1.3 That stance ignored the policy changes that had subsequently occurred which included:
- The issue of PPG2 1995 which provided a major change in the application of Green Belt policy to achieve sustainable patterns of development, and
  - That the proposed new settlement of the 1991 Plan was not then to be progressed.
- 1.4 The LPA decided to plan for a new and extended time horizon and draw up a substantial amendment to the deposited plan by way of ‘*in course of Inquiry changes.*’ To that end they formed a Green Belt Working Group Committee to oversee the project.
- 1.5 It is very difficult, if not impossible, to ascertain what constitutes the LPA’s evidence base for the PDLP. The LPA’s website has a ‘page’ entitled ‘*Local Plan Evidence Base*’. It is not clear whether other material is included by reference within the listed documents or whether other documents neither listed nor explicitly referred to are relevant.
- 1.6 The current evidence also includes material which was produced to support ‘*in course of Inquiry changes*’ in the 1998 CoYLP process. For example, the listed documents related to ‘*The Approach to Green Belt*’ are dated April 2003. The relevance of these is discussed at Chapter 3 - The Evidence Base. However, in order to provide meaningful analysis, it is necessary to review the workings of the Green Belt Working Group between 2000-2005.
- 1.7 The review of the material over this period also serves to provide an understanding of some of the evidence relied on for the PDLP and the credibility of the analysis the LPA’s based

upon it. Set out below is a list of the material reviewed in this part of the preparation of this Response.

1.8 List of the material reviewed.

Landscape Appraisal Brief	28.06.1996
Policy & Resources (urgency) committee – Minutes and Extract Report.	21.01.2000
Local Plan Steering Committee – Agenda Report	07.03.2000
Draft Framework for Consultation Paper	21.03.2000
York Green Belt Conference Papers	06.09.2000
Green Belt Working Group – Agenda Minutes and Reports	11.12.2000
Green Belt Working Group – Agenda Minutes and Reports	02.03.2001
Green Belt Consultation Leaflet	03.04.2001
Green Belt Working Group – Agenda Minutes and Reports	04.05.2001
Green Belt Working Group – Agenda Minutes and Reports	11.06.2001
CoYLP Position Paper	20.06.2001
Green Belt Working Group – Agenda Minutes and Reports	12.07.2001
Green Belt Working Group – Agenda Minutes and Reports	23.10.2001
CoYLP Position Paper	15.11.2001
Green Belt Conference Papers	26.02.2002
Green Belt Working Group – Agenda Minutes and Reports	11.03.2002
Green Belt Working Group – Agenda Minutes and Reports	28.08.2002
Third Set of Changes – Full Text (colour)	October 2002

Green Belt Working Group – Agenda Minutes and Reports	31.10.2002
Executive Committee Report item 10	01.11.2002
Green Belt Working Group – Agenda Minutes and Reports	13.10.2003
Green Belt Working Group – Agenda Minutes and Reports	28.01.2004
Green Belt Working Group – Agenda Minutes and Reports	01.06.2004
Green Belt Working Group – Agenda Minutes and Reports	25.08.2004
Local Planning Working Group – Report	22.09.2004
Green Belt Working Group – Agenda Minutes and Reports	19.10.2004
Fourth Set of Changes – Full Text	April 2005
Executive Committee Agenda 9 Report	30.07.2015

## 2.0 Material at Annexe IV

- 2.1 Annexe **IV** only consists of extracts from the material reviewed. To submit in evidence the Committee Reports in full would produce hundreds of pages, much of which relates to allocation proposals over an 18-year time period. In general, these are transitory considerations. Such an exercise would produce little information relevant to the soundness of the PDLP. However, it is submitted that the selection of documents at Annexe **IV** does not cherry pick the material but focusses on material relevant to establishing the necessary Secondary Policy for the PDLP.
- 2.2 Some comments are made in respect of the listed items but the approach has been to limit the produced material to that important to establish the robustness and credibility of the evidential support for this Response.
- 2.3 In the early part of 2000, the LPA’s Local Plan Steering Committee had set out a range of consultations and evidence gathering it needed to pursue.

- 2.4 A conference was held in September 2000 with selected participants. In consequence of back-tracking through the material the author of this Response issued an FOI letter to the LPA. It appeared the LPA had received material from consultants upon Green Belt matters. This turned out to be a Final Report upon '**Objectives of the Green Belt 2000: The Historic Character and Setting of York**'. This Report has never been referred to in a Council Committee Meeting and the document was never listed on any evidence base related to the Local Plan process over the time period 1999 to date.
- 2.5 The Response to the FOI letter came from the LPA on the 18.12.2017, with a further response on the 27.02.2018. **Annexe IV i pages 670** The reason given for the obscurity of this document is that '*it was not supported by Officers*'.
- 2.6 That reason is difficult to accept. Para. 3 of the Report to the first GBWG (**Annexe IV iii pages 675.**) on the 11.12.2000 refers to a methodology submitted to the LPA by ECUS, which was discussed at a conference held in September 2000. That conference was shown plans prepared by ECUS but the LPA's FOI response states these plans have not been archived and cannot now be produce. The paragraph in the GBWG goes on to state that the ECUS work *is being re-assessed* but does not state that a Final Report has been submitted. No record can be traced that Members were ever informed of this Final Report and it does not appear on the public record. It seems to be beyond credibility that Coun. Merrett, the chair of the Committee, who was so intimately involved, did not read the Final ECUS Report and discuss it with Officers. Councillor Merrett held great influence over the Local Plan process and is even reputed to have drafted section of the 1998 Plan.
- 2.7 The Final Report of ECUS is at **Annexe IV ii pages 675**. The detail of the Report is reviewed and analysed under Appendix 6 – The Evidence Base.
- 2.8 The GBWG held its first meeting on the 11.12.2000 and resolve a programme of work to '*review*' the YGB. A relevant extract of the Officer's Report to the meeting is at **Annexe IV iii pages 709**.
- 2.9 Paras. 2 to 7 of the Officer's Report to this meeting sets out the purpose of the Committee's work. Paras. 8 to 10 address the need for safeguarded land.
- 2.10 At the next meeting on the 02.03.2001 Officers advised on safeguarded land and stated that National Policy on this topic had only existed since 1995. In fact, the issue was flagged up in PPG2 1988 at para.11 (**See Annexe I iii page 170**).

- 2.11 In April 2001 the LPA had carried out a postal consultation with the public at large. The Distributed Questionnaire leaflet is at **Annexe IV iv pages 712**. The analysis draws some relevant observations from the leaflet as to the LPA's mindset in respect of the YGB and the process it was undertaking.
- 2.12 At the meeting on the 04.05.2001 the Committee resolved to have an Urban Capacity Study undertaken and to provide sufficient safeguarded land.
- 2.13 At the meeting on the 12.07.2001 the GBWG considered a Report from Officers on the Environmental Criteria for their 'review'. (**Annexe IV v pages #####**).
- 2.14 At a meeting on the 23.10.2001 (**See Annexe IV vi page ##**).
- 2.15 A further conference was held in February 2002 which was dominated by representatives of Parish Councils within the District.
- 2.16 At a meeting on the 11.03.2002 Para. 9 of the Report, which was issued under the Responsibility of the Assistant Director (Development and Transport), Bill Wooley and written by Alasdair Morrison, Head of Development and Regeneration is breath taking in its misconceptions. The report indicates that coalescence is a material purpose for 'reviewing' the Green Belt and that for the purpose of York the word 'towns' in PPG2 1995, in this respect, means villages. It goes on to state that an important focus is *'safeguarding...land that separates individual settlements from each other and from the York urban area.'* No reason is given for the addition of the words underlined, which did not appear in Primary Policy E8a. (**See Annexe IV vii page ##**).
- 2.17 The meeting held on the 28.08.2002 considered the 3rd Set of Changes. The 3rd Set of Changes is at (**See Annexe IV viii page ##**).
- 2.18 The meeting on the 13.10. 2003 reported the responses to the 3rd Set of Changes and consultation. The report also set out the English Heritage objection that suggested that an Environmental Capacity Study was necessary.
- 2.19 The meeting on the 28.01 2004 reviewed the English Heritage objection and decided that a Environmental Capacity Study was unnecessary for reasons which are different from those of this Response which reaches the same conclusions. (**See Annexe IV i x page ##**).

- 2.20 The meeting on the 19.08 2004 resolved to publish a 4th Set of Changes and noted the progress on preparing an LDF. **(See Annexe IV x page ##).**

### **3.0 Analysis**

- 3.1 The first meeting of the GBWG (**Annexe IV iii pages 709**). It is noted that the first sentence of Para.2 refers to establishing a boundary. From a review of the Committee's work over its life, it is clear this means the inner boundary. At no time is any assessment or review made in respect of the outer boundary. Also, this approach mirrors the approach in the 1998 Plan itself in terms of characterising the exercise as a review rather than a process of establishing the boundaries for the first time.
- 3.2 The LPA have never put forward in any form any actual proposals to establish safeguarded land designations.
- 3.3 The leaflet (**Annexe IV iv pages 712**) poses the rhetorical *question does York have a green belt?* and answers it by saying yes but the inner boundary has never been defined. There is no reference to the outer boundary. All concern is about development land demand and the inner boundary. It also states that land to be allocated for development will be adjoining urban areas.
- 3.4 The approach to addressing the Environmental Criteria in the LPA's review approach on the 12.07.2001 appears to be to look at what areas of greenfield land might be removed from the area that had been designated in 1998. (**Annexe IV v pages 720**). Effectively this means there is no review of the principles upon which the YGB is defined, the 1998 position (and by virtue of the fact of its baseline) the 1991 position is taken as a given and there is no attempt to address justifying that. In one sense this is understandable because the LPA's 12998 Plan was predicated on the basis that it took the 1991 Plan as a baseline and those factors could not be challenged on the basis they had already been addressed in a Public Inquiry.
- 3.5 At the 02.02.2000 meeting were not only the Members given inaccurate advice by Officer's as described at 2.14 above the author of this Response also (yet again) advised the Committee that it would be better to start from a clean sheet rather than review the designations of the 1998 Plan.

- 3.6 At the meeting on the 11.03.2002 as reviewed at 2.17 above the LPA reveal its object misunderstanding of the purpose of Green Belt in relation to coalescence and invent additional wording for the Primary Policy to relate it to coalescence between the urban core and adjacent settlements. This approach is directly in conflict with the guidance in PPG2 1995. That guidance remains unchanged today.
- 3.7 The adoption of the 4th Set of Changes presented the Development Control function with significant challenges. Not only was there a problem in arguing that weight should be attached to this document which has been concluded to be unsuitable to pursue, but also there were 11,000 unresolved objections.
- 3.8 It seems likely that the weakness of Development Control Policy position and the political determination to preserve the facade of a policy framework prevented any new approach materially departing from that of the 1998 proposals.
- 3.9 In May 2015 the Coalition agreement between the Conservative and Liberal Democrat Groups stated *'we will prepare an evidence-based Local Plan which delivers much needed housing whilst focusing development on ... land and taking all practical steps to protect the Green Belt and character of York.'* This statement re-affirms the approach that had existed from the preparation for the NYCSP 1980 some 40 years earlier that a Green Belt actually existed. There is no realisation on the part of the politicians and no advice from the Officers which says – *'the York Green Belt has yet to be defined and the parameters for that process are...'*
- 3.10 In the event the evidence base for the Local Plan is not new. It relies on, in respect of the Green Belt, material which dates back to 2003. This is some 10 years before the Primary Policy is established in the Revocation Order and 5 years before a purpose of the Green Belt was defined in policy in the RSS. Whilst several consultations have taken place and these issues have been raised, the LPA's sole Response is to produce the so called technical papers, which do not indicate the author of them had appropriate qualifications to give them weight. They also seek to re-define the role of coalescence arguing it relates to the issue of the City's setting but in doing so do not amend the baseline material from 2003.
- 3.11 This Response considers that the *'setting of York'* is a simple issue. It is the ring of open countryside in agricultural use with intermittent sportive woodland. That is what the Green Belt will preserve. It is not considered that the inset settlements make any positive contribution to the setting but they need to be constrained so as not to damage the setting.

#### **4.0 Conclusions.**

4.1 The conclusions are categorised as either '*Assessments*' or '*Conclusions*'. The categories are explained at para. 1.3.9 of the Response at page 4. The Assessments are referred to by a letter **A** and the Conclusions by a letter **C** and both are then sequentially numbered throughout the Appendix section of the Response.

4.2 Assessment drawn from the Appendix are as follows:

**A.13** The LPA has chosen to suppress and ignore evidence from specialist consultants that indicate an alternative approach to the fixing of the inner boundary.

**A.14** The LPA has deliberately avoided having to designate safeguarded land in consequence of electing to pursue a tightly drawn inner boundary.

**A.15** The LPA's considerations since 1998 have been focused on development land allocations and it has not addressed the fundamental form of the Green Belt following the change in Primary Policy but has chosen to consider that no material change in Primary Policy actually occurred.

4.3 The conclusions drawn from this Appendix are as follows:

**C.16** The discarded ECUS Report indicated a reasonable alternative approach to the resolution of the inner boundary and one which could conform with the Key Diagram of RSS, but the LPA has chosen not to consider any alternative approach.

**C.17** The LPA have continuously regarded the provision of Secondary Policy as a matter of review of the 1991 YGBLP proposals and have consistently ignored the significant changes in policy with which the Secondary Policy has to either conform or be consistent with.

**C.18** The LPA have misconceived and/or misinterpreted the framework policy in order to justify outcomes that are pre-determined and have generated retrospective evidence to justify that pre-determined view. That process has involved misleading and misconceived advice being presented by senior Officers to Members.



## APPENDIX 6 – MISCELLANEOUS MATERIAL

### 1.0 George E. Wright MA MPTRI - Qualifications and Experience

- 1.1 George Wright is a Chartered Town Planner and has a Master's Degree in Town and Regional Planning with distinction.
- 1.2 He practices as a private-sector planning consultant but has on occasions been appointed by LPA's to give evidence on their behalf in Public Inquiries.
- 1.3 His experience relates to being either an advocate or expert witness in planning matters including submitting planning applications, team leader in major applications, planning appeals of all types and representative at Enquires in Public.
- 1.4 He has acted in Judicial Reviews as a witness and instructing Counsel.
- 1.5 The first appearance as a witness in a Public Inquiry was in 1962 and between 1967 and for 28 years practiced as a solicitor specialising in Town and County Planning, acting for both the private and public sector including the British Government and United Nations. From 1999 he has practiced as a Chartered Town Planner.
- 1.6 He appeared in the 1998 CoYLP Green Belt Review Table Process between 1999 and 2003 and in the RSS EiP on the York Green Belt sessions. (See Inspector's Notes at **Annexe III xi-xiv pages 625-658** and **Annexe II x pages 381**).
- 1.7 He has appeared in several major Public Inquiries related to YGB issues and participated as a witness and/or advisor in others.

[ Deliberately left blank ]

## 2.0 Acronyms and Glossary of terms.

2.1 Acronyms. The acronyms used in this Response are as follows:

- **A.** - An Assessment made in this Response which is a conclusion made on a balance of probabilities in relation to the evidence reviewed.
- **C.** - A Conclusion made in this Response which is drawn on the basis of being beyond all reasonable doubt.
- **CoYLP.** - The City of York Local Plan submitted in 1998 and subject to a Public Inquiry that did not conclude but the Plan was withdrawn in 2004.
- **CoYC.** - City of York Council [The LPA since 1996].
- **DoE.** - Department of Environment.
- **GBRT** – The Green Belt Round Table meetings called by the Local Plan Inspector in respect of the 1998 CoYLP.
- **GBWG** - A committee of the CoYC – The Green Belt Working Group.
- **GoYH.** - Government Office for Yorkshire and the Humber.
- **GYA.** – The Greater York Area as defined on a Plan at Annex e v i
- **GYS** – The Greater York Study 1990 produced by NYCC.
- **LPA** - Local Planning Authority.
- **MHCLG** – Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.
- **MHLG** - Minister or Ministry of Housing and Local Government. (according to context).
- **NPPF** – National Planning policy framework.
- **NYCC** – The North Yorkshire County Council.
- **NYCSP** - The North Yorkshire County Structure Plan adopted 1980 and replaced 1995.

- **ODPM** - Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.
- **PDLP** – City of York Publication Draft Local Plan 2018.
- **RSS** – Regional Spatial Strategy for Yorkshire and the Humber 2008.
- **SoS** - Secretary of State (responsible for Town & Country Planning).
- **YGB** – The York Green Belt.
- **YGBLP** - The York Green Belt Local Plan 1991 submitted; subject to Public Inquiry unadopted.

**2.2 Glossary of Terms. The following expressions are defined for the purposes of this Response:**

<i>Assessment.</i>	This is a conclusion drawn from the evidence based on the evidential test of ' <i>on a balance of probabilities</i> '. This is Indicated in the text by a capital letter <b>A</b> and followed by a number.
<i>Conclusion.</i>	This is a conclusion drawn from the evidence based on the evidential test of ' <i>beyond all reasonable doubt</i> '. This is indicated in the text by a capital letter <b>C</b> and followed by a number.
<i>Environmental Capacity</i>	A planning test intended to identify levels of impact, specifically adverse impacts which affect the setting and character of an historic settlement, that the settlement is capable of absorbing without unacceptable loss to those features.
<i>Greater York Area</i>	An area comprising the Parishes identified on a Map at Annexe V ii and delineated thereon.
<i>Primary Policy</i>	Policy intended to establish the general extent of a green belt and possibly provide a framework for aspects of the Secondary Policy.
<i>Secondary Policy</i>	Policy in conformity with the Primary Policy which defines the boundaries to the outer and inner extent of the Green Belts as well as the status of any settlements within the

	Green Belt, any inset settlements and safeguarded land.
<i>Urban Capacity</i>	The capacity of the existing urban area of a District to accommodate development sites.

### 3.0 Bibliography

Circular 4/96 Local Government Act 1992 and TCPA 1990: '*Local Government Changes at the Planning System*' (DoE) March 1996.

*'Environmental Capacity – A Methodology for Historic Cities*' February 1995.

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*'Saltaire Environmental Capacity Study*'. Atkins 12.02.2018.

*'Settings of Heritage Assets*' – Good Practise Advice Planning Note 3, Historic England

*'The Land Cover Atlas of the UK*'; Ref. Alasdair Rae, Sheffield University Department of Urban Studies.

The North Yorkshire (District of York) (*Structural and Boundary changes*) Order 1995.  
*The Local Government Changes for England Regulations* 1994.

*'The Setting of Cultural Heritage Feature*' Colcutt, 1999. JPL [1999] 498-513.

### 4.0 Confirmation Bias.

4.1 Confirmation bias is a psychological term which explains the cognitive bias that involves accepting evidence that supports an existing belief in an idea or concept and rejects information which contradicts it.

- 4.2 As such, confirmation bias influences how information is interpreted, explaining how information is processed by a group or individual according to the pre-formed beliefs. Evidence is accepted and given elevated status where it confirms the belief because the receptor wishes it to be true or correct. Equally where material casts doubt on the belief it is disregarded.
- 4.3 The theory indicates that those affected by the condition are inhibited from viewing matters objectively and become selective in the data they accept only when it supports their prejudice.
- 4.3 The condition has recently been observed in the justice system where numerous rape trials have collapsed due to non-disclosure of evidence by the Police to the Defendant's representatives and other evidenced has been promoted without objective assessment.
- 4.4 There are a number of significant instances or circumstances in the lead up to the preparation of the PDLP which signify the existence of confirmation bias. Examples are:
- The rejection and suppression of the ECUS Report on the historic character and setting of York that indicate an approach other than a tightly constrained inner boundary,
  - The advice that adjacent villages were the settlements which PPG2 described as towns in relation to coalescence,
  - The denial that promoting a plan with a 5-year time horizon would satisfy Regulation that require a minimum of 10 years,
  - And finally, the belief in the PDLP submission that a housing requirement in clear conflict with National advice and requirement would be acceptable.
- 4.5 These issues are referred in the Response and evidenced by the material submitted with the exception of the last item. This is one which is undoubtedly addressed in other objections and will be well to the fore of the Plan Inspector's concerns about soundness.

## **5.0 Extract from Report prepared by Atkins.**

- 5.1 This Report was prepared by Atkins on behalf of Bradford Metropolitan Council in connection with a submission of the town of Saltaire as a World Heritage Site. The extract provided relates to a general assessment of the role of Setting in a planning context. It is considered to be a useful baseline for setting issues at York.

[Continue onto page 102]

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3. **APPROACHES AT OTHER UK WORLD HERITAGE SITES**

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**ANNEX 1 – DEFINITIONS OF SETTING AT THE GIANT'S CAUSEWAY**

**ANNEX 2 – APPROACH TO SETTING AT THE WELSH CASTLES**

**ANNEX 3 – TOWER OF LONDON SKY CONTOUR MODELS**

**ANNEX 4 – CRITERIA FOR SCHEDULING ANCIENT MONUMENTS**

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This appendix presents a review of the concept of setting and identifies the criteria / themes that have been used to define and describe the setting of the Saltaire World Heritage Site (WHS) as laid out in Appendix B of the main report.
- 1.2 The appendix begins with an overview of the concept of setting (Section 2.0); and then examines approaches to setting at other World Heritage Sites in the UK (Section 3.0). The analysis of the Site's setting can be found in Appendix B of the Main Report

## 2. OVERVIEW OF THE CONCEPT OF SETTING

### Planning Policy Background

- 2.1 The concept of setting is identified in Planning Policy Guidance (PPG 15 and PPG 16) as well as statute (Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Area) Act 1990).

### PPG 15 - Listed Buildings

*2.16 Sections 16 and 66 of the Act [Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990] require authorities considering applications for planning permission or listed building consent for works which affect a listed building to have special regard to certain matters, including the desirability of preserving the setting of the building. The setting is often an essential part of the building's character, especially if a garden or grounds have been laid out to complement its design or function...*

*2.17 Local planning authorities are required under section 67 of the Act to publish a notice of all applications they receive for planning permission for any development which, in their opinion, affects the setting of a listed building. This provision should not be interpreted too narrowly: the setting of a building may be limited to obviously ancillary land, but may often include land some distance from it. Even where a building has no ancillary land - for example in a crowded urban street - the setting may encompass a number of other properties. The setting of individual listed buildings very often owes its character to the harmony produced by a particular grouping of buildings (not necessarily all of great individual merit) and to the quality of the spaces created between them. Such areas require careful appraisal when proposals for development are under consideration, even if the redevelopment would only replace a building which is neither itself listed nor immediately adjacent to a listed building. Where a listed building forms an important visual element in a street, it would probably be right to regard any development in the street as being within the setting of the building. A proposed high or bulky building might also affect the setting of a listed*

*building some distance away, or alter views of a historic skyline. In some cases, setting can only be defined by a historical assessment of a building's surroundings. If there is doubt about the precise extent of a building's setting, it is better to publish a notice."*

#### **PPG 15 - Conservation Areas**

*"4.14 Section 72 of the Act [Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990] requires that special attention shall be paid in the exercise of planning functions to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.... The desirability of preserving or enhancing the area should also, in the Secretary of State's view, be a material consideration in the planning authority's handling of development proposals which are outside the conservation area but would affect its setting, or views into or out of the area...."*

#### **PPG 15 - World Heritage Sites**

*"2.22 Details of World Heritage Sites in England are given in paragraph 6.35. No additional statutory controls follow from the inclusion of a site in the World Heritage list. Inclusion does, however, highlight the outstanding international importance of the site as a key material consideration to be taken into account by local planning authorities in determining planning and listed building consent applications, and by the Secretary of State in determining cases on appeal or following call-in.*

*2.23 Each local authority concerned, taking account of World Heritage Site designation and other relevant statutory designations, should formulate specific planning policies for protecting these sites and include these policies in their development plans. Policies should reflect the fact that all these sites have been designated for their outstanding universal value, and they should place great weight on the need to protect them for the benefit of future generations as well as our own. Development proposals affecting these sites or their setting may be compatible with this objective, but should always be carefully scrutinised for their likely effect on the site or its setting in the longer term. Significant development proposals affecting World Heritage Sites will generally require formal environmental assessment, to ensure that their immediate impact and their implications for the longer term are fully evaluated..."*

**PPG 15 - Registered Historic parks and gardens**

*"2.24 Again no additional statutory controls follow from the inclusion of a site in English Heritage's Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest (see paragraph 6.38), but local planning authorities should protect registered parks and gardens in preparing development plans and in determining planning applications. The effect of proposed development on a registered park or garden or its setting is a material consideration in the determination of a planning application. Planning and highway authorities should also safeguard registered parks or gardens when themselves planning new developments or road schemes."*

**PPG 16 - Archaeological Sites**

*"8...Where nationally important archaeological remains, whether scheduled or not, and their settings, are affected by proposed development there should be a presumption in favour of their physical preservation. Cases involving archaeological remains of lesser importance will not always be so clear cut and planning authorities will need to weigh the relative importance of archaeology against other factors including the need for the proposed development."*

*"18. The desirability of preserving an ancient monument and its setting is a material consideration in determining planning applications whether that monument is scheduled or unscheduled."*

*"27. Once the planning authority has sufficient information, there is a range of options for the determination of planning applications affecting archaeological remains and their settings. As stated in paragraph 8, where nationally important archaeological remains, whether scheduled or not, and their settings, are affected by proposed development there should be a presumption in favour of their physical preservation in-situ i.e., a presumption against proposals which would involve significant alteration or cause damage, or which would have a significant impact on the setting of visible remains."*

**Features capable of having a setting**

- 2.2 The following list identifies those types of cultural heritage features that are capable of having a setting in planning policy terms and highlights the guidance that states this:

- Scheduled Monuments (PPG 16)
- Nationally important archaeological remains (PPG 16)
- Other archaeological remains (PPG 16)
- Listed Buildings (PPG 15 and Planning Act 1990)
- Conservation Areas (PPG 15)
- Registered Historic Parks and Gardens (PPG 15)
- World Heritage Sites (PPG 15)

### Definition of the word "Setting"

- 2.3 Planning policy indicates that the setting of a cultural heritage feature is a material consideration in the planning process. However, there is no agreed definition of what constitutes the setting of a cultural heritage feature or what the word "setting" actually means. Numerous planning inquiries and legal cases have addressed the issue of setting and consequently there is considerable material (some of which is contradictory) available to practitioners in this field. Usefully, a paper was published in 1999 (Colcutt 1999) which presented a particular overview of selected cases up to that date.
- 2.4 In that paper Colcutt placed considerable emphasis on the dictionary definitions of "setting" and "set". He stated that the Oxford English Dictionary defines setting as *"the environment or surroundings in which a thing is set"*. From an analysis of the verb form of the word "set" Colcutt went on to argue that *"...the term 'setting' strongly implies intent, whether on the part of the original 'setter' or on that of the 'setter' of some later feature impinging upon the setting of the original feature."* (Colcutt 1999: 498). This he considers important as without intent he argues that a feature / relationship should not constitute part of the setting of a cultural heritage asset.
- 2.5 However, this is perhaps a relatively narrow definition of "setting" and "set" that focuses on an active rather than descriptive definition of the word "set". For example, "set" can be used descriptively such as in "the house is set against a background of tall trees". This usage does not imply intent on either the builders of the house or the planters (whether human or natural) of the trees.

- 2.6 It is therefore acceptable to define the setting of a feature as having both intentional elements (e.g. the placement of features to create a garden around a house) and more descriptive elements (e.g. the general environment in which a feature is situated) as both can be argued to contribute to its overall setting. These active and passive elements are important especially when considering the issues of contemporaneity between features and the contribution of modern landscapes / townscapes to the setting of a place. This broader definition of what setting can constitute is perhaps supported by a definition of setting identified by Alexandra Faulkner (Faulkner 1999) which states that:

*"The setting of a building has been defined as the environs of a building or other feature which directly contribute to the atmosphere or ambience of that building or feature"* (Inspector's definition in a Listed Building Appeal - Leeds City Council, 8 February 1996).

### **Defining the "setting" of a place**

#### ***Introduction***

- 2.7 Without an agreed definition of the word "setting" it is not surprising that no methodology or set of criteria have been established for defining the setting of a cultural heritage feature. Instead a case-by-case based approach has developed in the UK with individuals developing different approaches for different sites in different circumstances. The majority of work on setting has occurred for the purposes of promoting or objecting to development at planning inquiries. Consequently, setting tends to be examined through a legal-style approach that focuses on determining the impact of a potential development on the setting of a site. The notable exceptions to this are the World Heritage Sites in the UK. These are essentially the only cultural heritage features to have their setting regularly defined outside of a planning inquiry, as such they provide an interesting case study in their own right (see Section 3.0).
- 2.8 In terms of what actually constitutes the setting of a Site and what should be taken into account when defining and describing setting a number of themes emerge from the many planning inquiries that have examined these issues.

### **Visual Aspects**

- 2.9 It is clear from the majority of cases that there is a strong focus on visual aspects. At its most general it could be argued that the setting of site extents to its visual envelope, in effect all areas of land from which the site can be seen or land that can be seen from the site. However, there are many issues with using this approach. Firstly, should that visual envelope be based on current landscapes / townscapes or should it be a theoretical envelope that allows for future change or past circumstances? Secondly, it is perfectly possible to imagine a situation where the visual envelope of a site omits parts of its setting, for instance a designed park and garden associated with a grand country house may have areas that lie outside of the visual envelope of the house (e.g. land behind a hill in the park), these areas could still be taken to form part of the house's setting. Thirdly, how does one address the issue of potential future change in this context, for example a piece of land may lie outside of the visual envelope of a site but if a tall building were to be constructed on that piece of land it would be visible from the site and would therefore affect its setting.
- 2.10 The visual envelope, whether current or theoretical, forms only one avenue of analysis. In fact, in some instances inspectors have ruled that a development would have an impact on the setting of a site even when current visual connections between a site and the development have been screened (e.g. Woodhouse Farm, Essex – APP/L1500/A/94/241057).
- 2.11 The visual aspect often includes identifying views of the site and views from the site. This approach has been supported by case law (*Revival Properties v. Secretary of State 1996*) where the court held that when considering the impact of a development on a listed building or ancient monument it was proper to have regard to:
- a) the view from the listed building or monument towards the proposed development;
  - b) the view from the development towards the building or monument and;
  - c) any other relevant view from the site.
- 2.12 The nature of these individual views is important as more weight may be given certain types of views e.g.:

- designed views out of a site e.g. park and garden vistas;
- views of a site with historical precedents (e.g. relating to famous paintings);
- views out of a site that particularly structure people's experience of that site;
- views from points in the wider area with direct historical / cultural connections;
- general views of the site that particularly allow people to appreciate the form or scale of a site; and
- views of notable iconic elements within a site.

2.13 Other types of view such as general glimpsed views or those that are perhaps accidental and lacking in historical precedent would probably be given less weight within the context of a planning decision but could still form a part of the site's overall setting. It is therefore appropriate when defining a site's setting, in particular one with a strong visual presence or designed landscape / townscape, to develop a hierarchy of views into and out of the site.

#### ***Significances and Characteristics of a site***

2.14 It is clear from the above that the significances and characteristics of a site also have a bearing on the definition of a site's setting. For instance, with a designed historic park and garden it is likely that key vistas and views out of the site would be a particularly important aspect of its setting, whereas for a farmhouse it may be associated fields that form a key element of its setting. In every case it is important that an understanding of the characteristics and significances of a site are used to inform the identification of aspects of its setting.

#### ***Topographic relationships***

2.15 Another aspect that regularly emerges is the relationship between a site and the topography of the area. This governs in part the visual envelope of a site but in many cases, sites have an intentional relationship with topography e.g. some prehistoric stone circles and garden follies. At an inquiry in 2003 for a new housing development on the edge of Cowbridge (Vale of Glamorgan – appeal references A--PP172-98- 003 and A--PP172-98- 002) the issue of topography and visibility was successfully used to demonstrate that the

proposed development would impact on the setting of a scheduled hillfort. The decision letter from the Welsh Assembly stated that *"the proposal would cause a substantial change to the character and appearance of the appeals site from a rural to urban scene which would adversely affect the visual and recreational experience currently enjoyed and affect the setting of the Llanblethian Hillfort."* This latter point could also be taken to indicate that the general character of the environment of the hillfort (in this case rural) was also an issue and the urbanisation of this area would therefore harm this aspect of the site's setting.

- 2.16 Overall, topographic relationships are important aspects, particularly with regard to the visual elements of a site's setting, and do need to be considered.

### **Historical Relationships**

- 2.17 As noted in paragraph 2.17 of PPG15 with regard to the setting of listed building *"In some cases, setting can only be defined by a historical assessment of a building's surroundings."* This would indicate that historical relationships and past land uses can be a valid element of a site's setting. This is particularly relevant where those relationships and uses remain. In these cases those areas may make a greater contribution to the setting of site than areas where modern uses that do not accord with historical uses dominate. However, as noted above modern uses that *"contribute to the atmosphere or ambience of that building or feature"* can still rightfully be considered as part of the setting, particularly if there are visual relationships.
- 2.18 As mentioned above, greater weight may be given to views from features that have a historical relationship with a site. This idea could perhaps be extended to a more general point to include features, with or without views, which relate to the historical development or establishment of a site. Using Saltaire as a case study, the canal and river were clearly key reasons for the establishment of the site in this location. The issue here is whether historical relationships can, without visibility, justify inclusion within the concept of setting or whether they form some other aspect of the site's relationship to a wider environment. This is a difficult point. Currently case law is unclear on this point and commentators tend to focus of the visual aspects of setting. However, if one takes a more experiential and value based approach to the definition of setting then features such as canals and rivers could form part of a site's

setting and alteration to these would impact on people's experience and understanding of that site.

- 2.19 It may be better, however, to view these elements as part of a wider group of features related to the site and examine these relationships through the concept of "group value". This concept is detailed in Annex 4 of PPG 16 - Secretary Of State's Criteria for Scheduling Ancient Monuments (see Annex 4) which states that:

*"(iv) Group Value: the value of a single monument (such as a field system) may be greatly enhanced by its association with related contemporary monuments (such as a settlement and cemetery) or with monuments of different periods. In some cases, it is preferable to protect the complete group of monuments, including associated and adjacent land, rather than to protect isolated monuments within the group."*

- 2.20 However, recently commentators have begun to develop another concept in this regard, namely that of "context". At the recent A303 Improvement Inquiry for the Stonehenge WHS the Highways Agency in their proof of evidence defined context as:

*"Context is commonly used to describe the concept that allows one thing to be related to others. By doing this, different things can be given relative values. These relationships may be physical or esoteric, the latter relating to concepts of time (historical context), society (social context), economy (economic context) and so forth. The wider use of the term also depends upon knowledge beyond what may be seen or felt on a site. The concept of context is vital to modern cultural heritage studies for without it individual components could only be studied in isolation and their value could not be gauged in relation to other landscape components."*

- 2.21 The acceptability of this concept / definition remains to be determined as the inspector's and ultimately the Secretary of State's decision on this is still awaited. However, it is important to note that the term "context" does not appear in PPG16 (except in criteria II where a national and regional context is referred to – see Annex 4). It appears only once in PPG 15 (in relation to concepts relating to setting) where it is stated in para 4.17 that:

*4.17 Many conservation areas include gap sites, or buildings that make no positive contribution to, or indeed detract from, the character or*

*appearance of the area; their replacement should be a stimulus to imaginative, high quality design, and seen as an opportunity to enhance the area. What is important is not that new buildings should directly imitate earlier styles, but that they should be designed with respect for their context, as part of a larger whole which has a well-established character and appearance of its own.*

- 2.22 The use of the term context here relates to the concept of the character within a conservation area. The concept of character is well attested to in issues relating to setting and therefore it seems as if within planning policy the issue of context can be seen broadly speaking to lie within the concept of setting.
- 2.23 At this stage the new emerging definition of context does not seem to be supported by existing planning policy guidance and its validity remains to be determined in case law. Some of the concepts outlined within the definition of context put forward by the Highways Agency e.g. historical relationships, are perhaps already supported by existing understandings of "setting" whilst others are seemingly reflected in the concept of Group Value (see Annex 4). The separation of "context" and "setting" therefore seems to be relatively arbitrary at this stage.
- 2.24 This issue has until now generally been explored with regard to archaeological sites and associated features where relationships (particularly diachronic relationships) tend to be a matter of archaeological interpretation rather, as with the case of more recent structures, a matter of demonstrable historical fact. It may however become an issue in relation to Saltaire.

### ***Importance of a Site***

- 2.25 In terms of the weight given to the setting of a cultural heritage feature it is clear that the relative importance of a feature is important in this regard. A fact clearly acknowledged by the Secretary of State when addressing the matter of a temporary impact on the setting of the Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site (M42/R2900/1). Here it was ruled that a gas exploration rig that would have been in place for only 40 days would have had an unacceptable impact on the setting of Hadrian's Wall – something that would indicate that World Heritage Sites can be afforded particular protection given their international importance. However, this is somewhat undermined by the recent St George's Wharf inquiry in London (DSC no. 100036741 – see *Planning* May 2005) after which the Deputy Prime Minister granted permission

## Overview of Setting

for a 50 storey tower even though it would adversely impact on an important view of the Westminster WHS from Westminster Bridge and consequently erode the quality of the WHS.

### ***In Summary***

2.26 Setting cannot be easily defined. From an analysis of the above it is clear that a number of factors can contribute to the definition and description of a site's setting. These include:

- The visual envelope of a site (although it is unclear whether this is its current envelope or a theoretical envelope);
- Views into and out of a site, especially those that directly relate to the characteristics or significances of a site;
- Historically related features around a site;
- The general environs of a site that contribute to its current ambience / sense of place;
- Topographic relationships; and
- Areas that retain a land-use that is broadly the same as contemporary historic uses.

2.27 Within these areas particular weight can be given to elements that are intentionally related to a site e.g. designed views and known historical connections. Although modern aspects of character, experience and ambience cannot be discounted

2.28 It is clear that there is a difference between the extent of a site's setting (perhaps best defined by a theoretical visual envelope) and the characteristics and features within that extent that particularly contribute to its setting. In terms of assessing the impact of change on the setting of a site issues such as proximity and the potential impact of the change on the key characteristics would need to be taken into account. For instance, changes at the edge of the visual envelope that do not impact on key characteristics would not have a "significant impact" (see PPG 16 paragraph 27 above) on the setting of a site and would therefore probably be acceptable in planning terms. Changes that would affect the key characteristics of the setting of a site may have a

significant impact and may therefore be unacceptable in planning terms. A particular area of debate relates to changes in close proximity to a site that would not affect key characteristics but by nature of their very proximity may impact on the general experience and ambience of a site, these may be deemed to have a significant impact.

# ANNEXE I

NATIONAL GREEN BELT POLICY & RESEARCH.

# ANNEXE I i

Circulars 42/55; 50/57 & 14/84

[This Appendix comprises Circular 14/84 to which the earlier Circulars 50/57 and 42/55 were annexed].



Circular from the  
Department of the Environment  
2 Marsham Street, London SW1P 3EB

Sir

4 July 1984

### Green Belts

1. The Government continues to attach great importance to Green Belts, which have a broad and positive planning role in checking the unrestricted sprawl of built-up areas, safeguarding the surrounding countryside from further encroachment, and assisting in urban regeneration. There must continue to be a general presumption against inappropriate development within Green Belts. The Government reaffirms the objectives of Green Belt policy and the related development control policies set out in Ministry of Housing and Local Government Circular 42/55.

2. Structure plans have now been approved for most parts of the country and these identify the broad areas of the Green Belt. Detailed Green Belt boundaries are now being defined in local plans and in many cases these are based on Green Belt areas defined in earlier development plans approved prior to the introduction of structure and local plans. This process of local plan preparation is continuing and this circular includes advice on the definition of detailed Green Belt boundaries in local plans.

3. The essential characteristic of Green Belts is their permanence and their protection must be maintained as far as can be seen ahead. It follows from this that:

(a) Once the general extent of a Green Belt has been approved as part of the structure plan for an area it should be altered only in exceptional circumstances. If such an alteration is proposed the Secretary of State will wish to be satisfied that the authority has considered opportunities for development within the urban areas contained by and beyond the Green Belt. Similarly, detailed Green Belt boundaries defined in adopted local plans or earlier approved development plans should be altered only exceptionally.

(b) Where detailed Green Belt boundaries have not yet been defined in earlier approved development plans or in adopted local plans—for example, where approved structure plans have extended the area of the Green Belt to include areas previously referred to as “interim” Green Belt—it is necessary to establish boundaries that will endure. It is especially important that these boundaries of Green Belts should be carefully drawn so as not to include land which it is unnecessary to keep permanently open for the purpose of the Green Belt. Otherwise there is a risk that encroachment on the Green Belt may have to be allowed in order to accommodate future development. If Green Belt boundaries are drawn excessively tightly around existing built-up areas it may not be possible to maintain the degree of permanence that Green Belts should have. This would devalue the concept of the Green Belt and also reduce the value of local plans in making proper provision for necessary development in the future.

4. Since the protection of Green Belts must be maintained, planning authorities in defining detailed Green Belt boundaries in local plans will need to relate their proposals to a longer time scale than is normally adopted in plans for new development. While making provision for development in general conformity with the structure plan they should satisfy themselves that Green Belt boundaries will not need to be altered at the end of that period. In some cases this will mean safeguarding land between the urban area and the Green Belt which may be required to meet longer term development needs. The normal process of development control serves this purpose and authorities should state clearly in structure and local plans the policies that they intend to apply in those areas over the period covered by the plan.

5. It is particularly important that full use is made of opportunities for bringing back into use areas of neglected or derelict land and for recycling urban land, including obsolete industrial sites and buildings unlikely to be required in future for their original purpose. The development of such sites can make a valuable contribution to inner city renewal and reduce the pressures on undeveloped land. The maintenance of effective Green Belt policy will assist in this.

6. Well defined long-term Green Belt boundaries will help to ensure its future agricultural, recreational and amenity value, whereas less secure boundaries would make it more difficult for farmers and other land owners to maintain and improve their land. Local planning authorities can assist in this by working together with land owners and voluntary groups to enhance the countryside, and especially those areas of land within the Green Belt, or adjacent to it, which are suffering from disuse or neglect. This is particularly important in parts of the Green Belt that are close to existing urban development, or between urban areas within conurbations, and which can be especially vulnerable to neglect or damage. Such areas may form an important part of the Green Belt and, if so, need to be protected and maintained. But in considering whether to include such areas within the Green Belt, where detailed boundaries have not yet been established, authorities should also consider carefully whether the land could be better reserved for future development and thus ease the pressure on other land that should have the long-term protection of the Green Belt. Once the detailed boundaries have been fixed they should not be amended, or development allowed, merely because the land has become derelict. The overall aim should be to develop and maintain a positive approach to land-use management which *both* makes adequate provision for necessary development *and* ensures that the Green Belt serves its proper purpose.

7. For convenience the two earlier circulars on Green Belts (MHLG Circulars Nos. 42/55 and 50/57) are reproduced in the Annex to this circular. The policy advice that they contain remains valid but insofar as they relate to the earlier development plan system they are out-of-date and are replaced by the present circular.

I am, Sir, your obedient Servant,  
R. C. MABEY, *Assistant Chief Planner*

The Chief Executive  
County Councils } in England  
District Councils }  
London Borough Councils }  
The Town Clerk, City of London  
The Director-General, Greater London Council  
The National Park Officer  
Lake District Special Planning Board  
Peak Park Joint Planning Board

For information:  
The Chief Executive  
London Docklands Development Corporation  
Merseyside Development Corporation  
The General Manager, New Town Development Corporations  
[PLUP 6/1257/18]



**MINISTRY OF HOUSING AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT  
WHITEHALL, LONDON, S.W.1**

Sir,

3rd August, 1955

**GREEN BELTS**

1. Following upon his statement in the House of Commons on April 26th last (copy attached), I am directed by the Minister of Housing and Local Government to draw your attention to the importance of checking the unrestricted sprawl of the built-up areas, and of safeguarding the surrounding countryside against further encroachment.

2. He is satisfied that the only really effective way to achieve this object is by the formal designation of clearly defined Green Belts around the areas concerned.

3. The Minister accordingly recommends Planning Authorities to consider establishing a Green Belt wherever this is desirable in order:

- (a) to check the further growth of a large built-up area;
- (b) to prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another; or
- (c) to preserve the special character of a town.

4. Wherever practicable, a Green Belt should be several miles wide, so as to ensure an appreciable rural zone all round the built-up area concerned.

5. Inside a Green Belt, approval should not be given, except in very special circumstances, for the construction of new buildings or for the change of use of existing buildings for purposes other than agriculture, sport, cemeteries, institutions standing in extensive grounds, or other uses appropriate to a rural area.

6. Apart from a strictly limited amount of "infilling" or "rounding off" (within boundaries to be defined in Town Maps) existing towns and villages inside a Green Belt should not be allowed to expand further. Even within the urban areas thus defined, every effort should be made to prevent any further building for industrial or commercial purposes; since this, if allowed, would lead to a demand for more labour, which in turn would create a need for the development of additional land for housing.

7. A Planning Authority which wishes to establish a Green Belt in its area should, after consulting any neighbouring Planning Authority affected, submit to the Minister, as soon as possible, a Sketch Plan, indicating the approximate boundaries of the proposed Belt. Before officially submitting their plans, authorities may find it helpful to discuss them informally with this Ministry either through its regional representative or in Whitehall.

8. In due course, a detailed survey will be needed to define precisely the inner and outer boundaries of the Green Belt, as well as the boundaries of towns and villages within it. Thereafter, these particulars will have to be incorporated as amendments in the Development Plan.

9. This procedure may take some time to complete. Meanwhile, it is desirable to prevent any further deterioration in the position. The Minister, therefore, asks that, where a Planning Authority has submitted a Sketch Plan for a Green Belt, it should forthwith apply provisionally, in the area proposed, the arrangements outlined in paragraphs 5 and 6 above.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

A. B. VALENTINE.

Under Secretary.

The Clerk of the Council,  
*Local Planning Authorities.*  
*County District Councils (for information).*  
*England and Wales.*

Annex to Circular No. 42/55

**STATEMENT BY THE RT. HON. DUNCAN SANDYS, M.P., MINISTER  
OF HOUSING AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT, IN THE HOUSE OF  
COMMONS ON 26th APRIL, 1955**

"I am convinced that, for the well-being of our people and for the preservation of the countryside, we have a clear duty to do all we can to prevent the further unrestricted sprawl of the great cities.

The Development Plans submitted by the local planning authorities for the Home Counties provide for a Green Belt, some 7 to 10 miles deep, all around the built-up area of Greater London. Apart from some limited rounding-off of existing small towns and villages, no further urban expansion is to be allowed within this belt.

These proposals if strictly adhered to, should prove most effective. For this the authorities in the Home Counties deserve much credit.

In other parts of the country, certain planning authorities are endeavouring, by administrative action, to restrict further building development around the large urban areas. But I regret that nowhere has any formal Green Belt as yet been proposed. I am accordingly asking all planning authorities concerned to give this matter further consideration, with a view to submitting to me proposals for the creation of clearly defined Green Belts, wherever this is appropriate.

However, I do not intend on this account to hold up my approval of Development Plans already before me. Additional provisions for Green Belts can be incorporated later."



**MINISTRY OF HOUSING & LOCAL GOVERNMENT  
WHITEHALL, LONDON, S.W.1**

19th September, 1957

SIR,

**GREEN BELTS**

1. I am directed by the Minister of Housing and Local Government to refer to Circular No. 42/55 about Green Belts.

2. A number of sketch plans have been received and considered, and the authorities can now proceed with formal proposals for the alteration of their Development Plans. This circular gives advice on the form of the submission.

**Boundaries of Green Belts**

3. The one-inch County Map will show the whole area of Green Belt falling within the County, apart from any areas covered by Town Maps. On the outer edges of a Green Belt it should be possible to choose a suitable boundary along roads, streams, belts of trees, or other features which can be readily recognised on the ground and which appear on the one-inch base map.

4. On an inner boundary, however, where the edge of the notation will mark a long-term boundary for development, treatment at a larger scale will be necessary. Where such boundaries fall in Town Map areas no difficulty of scale will arise; but where they do not, authorities are advised to adopt the 1:25000 (approximately 2½") scale, seeking the Minister's permission under Regulation 3 (2) of the Development Plan Regulations, 1948, for the submission of a section of the County Map at the larger scale. This larger scale inset is still legally part of the one-inch County Map and should show no more detail than is normally shown on that map.

5. The definition of a long-term boundary for development may involve detailed adjustments (either inwards or outwards) in the boundary of the area already allocated on a Town Map. Where land allocations are to be deleted or additional land allocated for development within the Plan period, the adjustments can be included in the same submission as the Green Belt proposals.

6. There may be some pockets of land, between the town and the Green Belt, which are not to be developed within the present Plan period but which could be developed later without prejudice to the Green Belt. It would be misleading to allocate such areas now, but to include them in the Green Belt for the time being might give rise to difficulties and undermine public confidence in the Green Belt at a later date if it were then decided to allocate the land for development. Such areas may well be left as pockets of "white" land. They are then bound to be especially attractive to developers

and it will be desirable to set out in the Written Statement the authority's policy for such areas in order to make it clear that they are not available for development at the present time.

#### Existing settlements

7. Where it is proposed to allow no new building at all, the Green Belt notation can be simply carried across the settlement. Where it is proposed to allow "infilling" but no extension of a settlement, and the form of the present settlement is such that it is clear what "infilling" would imply, the Green Belt notation can similarly be carried across the settlement. These settlements, however, will need to be listed in the Written Statement in order to distinguish them from the first category.

8. The need to map the limits for development of a settlement is likely to arise only where the authority propose to allow some limited measure of expansion, or where the existing development is scattered and the authority consider it necessary to show in the Plan their precise intentions, e.g. to permit the closing of some gaps by "infilling" but not others. In such cases a County Map inset on the 1:25000 (approximately 2½") scale will normally be needed.

#### Notation

9. The notation suggested for County Maps in revised (Circular No. 92) notation is an edging and open horizontal hatching with the initials GB where necessary. For County Maps in the full colour (Circular No. 59) notation an edging and open horizontal hatching in Green (2) is suggested.

#### Written Statements

10. The Written Statement forming part of the proposals for the alteration of the Development Plan should state:—

- (a) The reason for defining the Green Belt.
- (b) The kinds of development which the Council would be prepared to approve in the Green Belt. It will normally be appropriate for this statement to refer only to the categories of development listed in paragraph 5 of Circular No. 42/55, and to make no reference to the possibility of allowing other development in exceptional circumstances. These other exceptional cases would thus become proposals for development not in accord with the Development Plan and so be treated in accordance with the normal procedure in such cases.
- (c) The Council's intentions for development control in any border areas of "white" land of the kind referred to in paragraph 6 above.
- (d) The Council's intentions for development control in settlements where they are proposing to allow infilling or expansion.

Authorities may also care to include a reference to the special attention which will be paid to visual amenity when they consider proposals for development which will be in the Green Belt or conspicuous from it.

11. Most Green Belts will lie in the areas of more than one planning authority. It will clearly be desirable in such cases to secure a consistent development control policy over the whole Green Belt, and authorities will wish to consult with the other authorities concerned to secure such a policy. Specimen forms of words are set out in the Appendix to this Circular in order to provide a basis for co-operation in the drafting of Written Statements.

**Rural Areas generally**

12. It is important that the specially strict control in the Green Belts (and in the areas of landscape value) should not result in permission being given elsewhere for development which is inappropriate or detrimental to the countryside.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

J. H. STREET,

Under Secretary.

The Clerk of the Council.

*Local Planning Authorities*

*County District Councils (for information)*

*England and Wales*

(91220/3/4/3)

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Note: In Wales and Monmouthshire any communications in regard to this Circular should be addressed to the Under Secretary, Welsh Office, Ministry of Housing and Local Government, Cathays Park, Cardiff.

Appendix to Circular No. 50/57.

**SUGGESTED DRAFT PARAGRAPHS FOR WRITTEN STATEMENT**

**(a) Reason for the Green Belt**

1. It is considered that any substantial expansion of the built up area of..... should be checked. Land adjoining this area has therefore been defined in the Development Plan as a Green Belt in which new development will be severely restricted.

OR 2. It is considered essential to preserve the open character of the land between the towns/urban areas of....., and....., and to prevent these communities from merging into one another. Land between these towns/areas has therefore been defined in the Development Plan as a Green Belt in which new development will be severely restricted.

OR 3. It is considered that the special character of..... would be prejudiced by further development immediately around the town. Land around the town has therefore been defined in the Development Plan as a Green Belt in which new development will be severely restricted.

OR (for use by a County Borough)

4. It is proposed that a Green Belt be established around..... /between..... and..... A part of the proposed Green Belt lies within the County Borough boundary, and this land is defined in the Development Plan as an area of Green Belt in which new development will be severely restricted.

**(b) Types of development which will be allowed in the Green Belt**

The purposes for which building (and the change of use of existing buildings) will be permitted in the Green Belt are agriculture and forestry, sport, cemeteries, institutions standing in large grounds, or other uses appropriate to a rural area.

**(c) Development in "white" areas between the Green Belt and the areas allocated for development in the Plan**

In order to keep amendment of the Green Belt boundaries to a minimum the inner boundary of the Belt has been defined to leave unallocated certain areas of land between the Green Belt and the development proposals in the Plan; these areas may later be allocated to meet demands for development beyond the present period of the Plan. Meanwhile the authority will permit only such development there as would be appropriate in the neighbouring Green Belt.

**(d) Development in existing settlements within the Green Belt**

Of the settlements which lie within the Green Belt, it is intended that some slight expansion shall be allowed at..... and.....  
..... and the limits within which development in those settlements will be allowed are shown on insets to the County Map. It is proposed to permit only a limited amount of infilling in..... and.....  
..... and no limits of development have therefore been shown in these cases. No new industrial building will be permitted in any of the settlements in the Green Belt.

**(e) Development detrimental to the visual amenities of the Green Belt**

Care will be taken to ensure that the visual amenities of the Green Belt will not be injured by proposals for development within or conspicuous from the Green Belt which, although they would not prejudice its main purpose, might be inappropriate by reason of their siting, materials, or design.



Circular from the  
Department of the Environment  
2 Marsham Street, London SW1P 3EB

Sir

4 July 1984

### Green Belts

1. The Government continues to attach great importance to Green Belts, which have a broad and positive planning role in checking the unrestricted sprawl of built-up areas, safeguarding the surrounding countryside from further encroachment, and assisting in urban regeneration. There must continue to be a general presumption against inappropriate development within Green Belts. The Government reaffirms the objectives of Green Belt policy and the related development control policies set out in Ministry of Housing and Local Government Circular 42/55.

2. Structure plans have now been approved for most parts of the country and these identify the broad areas of the Green Belt. Detailed Green Belt boundaries are now being defined in local plans and in many cases these are based on Green Belt areas defined in earlier development plans approved prior to the introduction of structure and local plans. This process of local plan preparation is continuing and this circular includes advice on the definition of detailed Green Belt boundaries in local plans.

3. The essential characteristic of Green Belts is their permanence and their protection must be maintained as far as can be seen ahead. It follows from this that:

(a) Once the general extent of a Green Belt has been approved as part of the structure plan for an area it should be altered only in exceptional circumstances. If such an alteration is proposed the Secretary of State will wish to be satisfied that the authority has considered opportunities for development within the urban areas contained by and beyond the Green Belt. Similarly, detailed Green Belt boundaries defined in adopted local plans or earlier approved development plans should be altered only exceptionally.

(b) Where detailed Green Belt boundaries have not yet been defined in earlier approved development plans or in adopted local plans—for example, where approved structure plans have extended the area of the Green Belt to include areas previously referred to as "interim" Green Belt—it is necessary to establish boundaries that will endure. It is especially important that these boundaries of Green Belts should be carefully drawn so as not to include land which it is unnecessary to keep permanently open for the purpose of the Green Belt. Otherwise there is a risk that encroachment on the Green Belt may have to be allowed in order to accommodate future development. If Green Belt boundaries are drawn excessively tightly around existing built-up areas it may not be possible to maintain the degree of permanence that Green Belts should have. This would devalue the concept of the Green Belt and also reduce the value of local plans in making proper provision for necessary development in the future.



MINISTRY OF HOUSING AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT  
WHITEHALL, LONDON, S.W.1

Sir,

3rd August, 1955

GREEN BELTS

1. Following upon his statement in the House of Commons on April 26th last (copy attached), I am directed by the Minister of Housing and Local Government to draw your attention to the importance of checking the unrestricted sprawl of the built-up areas, and of safeguarding the surrounding countryside against further encroachment.

2. He is satisfied that the only really effective way to achieve this object is by the formal designation of clearly defined Green Belts around the areas concerned.

3. The Minister accordingly recommends Planning Authorities to consider establishing a Green Belt wherever this is desirable in order:

- (a) to check the further growth of a large built-up area;
- (b) to prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another; or
- (c) to preserve the special character of a town.

4. Wherever practicable, a Green Belt should be several miles wide, so as to ensure an appreciable rural zone all round the built-up area concerned.

5. Inside a Green Belt, approval should not be given, except in very special circumstances, for the construction of new buildings or for the change of use of existing buildings for purposes other than agriculture, sport, cemeteries, institutions standing in extensive grounds, or other uses appropriate to a rural area.

6. Apart from a strictly limited amount of "infilling" or "rounding off" (within boundaries to be defined in Town Maps) existing towns and villages inside a Green Belt should not be allowed to expand further. Even within the urban areas thus defined, every effort should be made to prevent any further building for industrial or commercial purposes; since this, if allowed, would lead to a demand for more labour, which in turn would create a need for the development of additional land for housing.

7. A Planning Authority which wishes to establish a Green Belt in its area should, after consulting any neighbouring Planning Authority affected, submit to the Minister, as soon as possible, a Sketch Plan, indicating the approximate boundaries of the proposed Belt. Before officially submitting their plans, authorities may find it helpful to discuss them informally with this Ministry either through its regional representative or in Whitehall.

8. In due course, a detailed survey will be needed to define precisely the inner and outer boundaries of the Green Belt, as well as the boundaries of towns and villages within it. Thereafter, these particulars will have to be incorporated as amendments in the Development Plan.

9. This procedure may take some time to complete. Meanwhile, it is desirable to prevent any further deterioration in the position. The Minister, therefore, asks that, where a Planning Authority has submitted a Sketch Plan for a Green Belt, it should forthwith apply provisionally, in the area proposed, the arrangements outlined in paragraphs 5 and 6 above.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

A. B. VALENTINE,  
Under Secretary.

The Clerk of the Council,  
*Local Planning Authorities.*  
*County District Councils (for information).*  
*England and Wales.*

Amex to Circular No. 42/55

**STATEMENT BY THE RT. HON. DUNCAN SANDYS, M.P., MINISTER  
OF HOUSING AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT, IN THE HOUSE OF  
COMMONS ON 26th APRIL, 1955**

"I am convinced that, for the well-being of our people and for the preservation of the countryside, we have a clear duty to do all we can to prevent the further unrestricted sprawl of the great cities.

The Development Plans submitted by the local planning authorities for the Home Counties provide for a Green Belt, some 7 to 10 miles deep, all around the built-up area of Greater London. Apart from some limited rounding-off of existing small towns and villages, no further urban expansion is to be allowed within this belt.

These proposals if strictly adhered to, should prove most effective. For this the authorities in the Home Counties deserve much credit.

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However, I do not intend on this account to hold up my approval of Development Plans already before me. Additional provisions for Green Belts can be incorporated later."



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2. A number of sketch plans have been received and considered, and the authorities can now proceed with formal proposals for the alteration of their Development Plans. This circular gives advice on the form of the submission.

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and it will be desirable to set out in the Written Statement the authority's policy for such areas in order to make it clear that they are not available for development at the present time.

#### Existing settlements

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Authorities may also care to include a reference to the special attention which will be paid to visual amenity when they consider proposals for development which will be in the Green Belt or conspicuous from it.

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**Rural Areas generally**

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I am, Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

J. H. STREET,

Under Secretary,

The Clerk of the Council.

*Local Planning Authorities*

*County District Councils (for information)*

*England and Wales*

(91220/3/4/3)

Note: In Wales and Metropolitanities any communications in regard to this Circular should be addressed to the Under Secretary, White Office, Ministry of Housing and Local Government, Cockspur Park, Cardiff.

Appendix to Circular No. 58/57.

**SUGGESTED DRAFT PARAGRAPHS FOR WRITTEN STATEMENT**

**(a) Reason for the Green Belt**

1. It is considered that any substantial expansion of the built up area of..... should be checked. Land adjoining this area has therefore been defined in the Development Plan as a Green Belt in which new development will be severely restricted.

OR 2. It is considered essential to preserve the open character of the land between the towns/urban areas of....., and....., and to prevent these communities from merging into one another. Land between these towns/areas has therefore been defined in the Development Plan as a Green Belt in which new development will be severely restricted.

OR 3. It is considered that the special character of..... would be prejudiced by further development immediately around the town. Land around the town has therefore been defined in the Development Plan as a Green Belt in which new development will be severely restricted.

OR (for use by a County Borough)

4. It is proposed that a Green Belt be established around..... /between..... and..... A part of the proposed Green Belt lies within the County Borough boundary, and this land is defined in the Development Plan as an area of Green Belt in which new development will be severely restricted.

**(b) Types of development which will be allowed in the Green Belt**

The purposes for which building (and the change of use of existing buildings) will be permitted in the Green Belt are agriculture and forestry, sport, cemeteries, institutions standing in large grounds, or other uses appropriate to a rural area.

# ANNEXE I ii

MHLG BOOKLET – THE GREEN BELTS

1962



4s. od.



*Kenneth Stoven*

*Frontispiece. Pyrford Mill, Surrey. A peaceful scene beside the River Wey in London's green belt*

MINISTRY OF HOUSING & LOCAL GOVERNMENT

# THE GREEN BELTS



LONDON : HER MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE : 1962

*Stamen*

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Fig. 1 is taken from the Second Report of the Greater London Regional Planning Committee 1933; and Fig. 2 from The Greater London Plan 1944.

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- The appearance of a green belt.
- The role of the individual.

*Front cover photo: Box Hill, Surrey*

*¼" Map in pocket at end: Greater London's Green Belt*

## Introduction

### *What is a green belt?*

A green belt is an area of land, near to and sometimes surrounding a town, which is kept open by permanent and severe restriction on building. The form it takes depends on the purposes it is intended to serve. If it is wanted to prevent two near-by towns from joining up, all that is necessary is a sufficiently wide belt of open country between them, leaving the towns free to expand in other directions. More often, the purpose is to limit the expansion of a town and a virtually continuous belt all round it will be needed. There are also some groups of towns which are tending to merge into one solid urban mass. In such a case the green belt is partly a series of buffers of open land between the towns and partly a belt around the whole group.

### *The need for green belts*

The idea of a belt of open land around towns goes back to ancient times. Much of this land was used for growing food for the townspeople or pasturing their cattle but some of it provided space for recreation, for fairs and fights, sports and games and public occasions. This open belt served as a barrier against the spread of disease and as an exposed area which an attacking enemy would have to cross to reach the city walls. Modern transport now brings food to the city from far afield and permits the citizen to roam widely for his recreation. Modern medicine and modern housing have taken the terror from infectious diseases and walls have long been useless as defences. Then why should not the city be allowed to grow unchecked?

The answer is that some towns are already far too big for the comfort or the pleasure of the citizens, while others tend to merge with one another and need to be prevented from doing so. Many towns have expanded rapidly during the last hundred years and particularly since the advent of motor traffic. Some have coalesced with others to form huge conurbations where building seems endless and the boundary between different communities has become no more than a line on a map. Main roads have been

lined with houses on both sides, to the detriment of traffic, and the distinction between town and country has become blurred. All these are the consequences of sprawl, which it is the primary purpose of a green belt to prevent.

The secondary purpose is perhaps better understood and appreciated. It is to provide the townsman with the opportunity to escape from the noise, congestion and strain of city life and to seek recreation in the countryside. Sometimes he may want to take part in organized games or sports or to pursue some scientific or artistic study or interest. More often he is content just to ramble or ride with no other object than to enjoy the scenery, fresh air and sunshine.

### *Where is a green belt required?*

By no means all towns need a green belt. In many cases there is no good reason to check their expansion or to shape them in any particular fashion. In the normal way, planning authorities have adequate powers to control the growth of towns while maintaining a sharp distinction between town and country.

Mr. Duncan Sandys, who was then the Minister of Housing and Local Government, listed three reasons for the establishment of a green belt when he addressed a circular to local authorities on 3rd August, 1955. These three reasons were:

- (a) to check the growth of a large built-up area;
- (b) to prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another; or
- (c) to preserve the special character of a town.

His successor, Mr. Henry Brooke, emphasized the permanent nature of green belts and the limited circumstances where they are applicable when, on 5th July, 1960, he said:

*'The right principles are that a green belt should be established only where there is a clear need to contain the growth of a town within limits which can be defined at the time; and the limits of the belt should be carefully drawn so as not to include land which it is unnecessary to keep permanently open for the purpose of the green belt.'*

## The Origins of Green Belts

The first known attempt in this country to establish a green belt was a royal proclamation of Queen Elizabeth I in 1580, forbidding any new building on a new site within three miles of the city gates of London. The purposes were stated to be to ensure an abundance of cheap food and to mitigate the effects of an outbreak of plague. A similar proclamation was made by James I and in 1657 the Commonwealth Parliament passed an Act to limit the amount of building within ten miles of London by requiring new houses to have at least 4 acres of land.

No more legislative action was taken until the present century, though several suggestions were made for limiting the growth of the metropolis and establishing a belt of open country to be used either for agriculture or recreation.

### *The Greater London Regional Planning Committee*

In the 1920's the need to limit the spread of London became once more the concern of government. Electric power had freed many industries from having to be on the coalfields and they were attracted to the huge consumer market of London which, at the same time, provided skilled and versatile work-people and a good distribution centre. Unemployment in the industrial north and in South Wales sent many journeying to London to work in the new light industries springing up in and around the capital. The population increased rapidly and the ever-expanding transport services enabled people to live further and further from their place of work. Something had to be done. So in 1927 Mr. Neville Chamberlain, who was then the Minister of Health, set up the Greater London Regional Planning Committee. In addressing the first meeting of the Committee he asked them, amongst other things, to consider whether London should *'be provided with something which might be called an agricultural belt, as has often been suggested, so that it would form a dividing line between Greater London as it is and the satellites or fresh developments that might take place at a greater distance'*.

At an early stage in the Committee's deliberations

their technical adviser, Sir Raymond Unwin, impressed on them the urgent need to reserve land for the recreation of Londoners. There were far too few playing fields within reach of the built-up area, suitable land was rapidly being taken for building and the additional population increased the demand. Instead of an agricultural belt, he suggested a girdle of open space to provide a reserve for the deficiency of playing fields near to the centre. He urged that building beyond this girdle should be planned against a background of open space instead of planning open space against a background of unlimited building land, as current legislation compelled (Fig. 1).

### *The Green Belt Act of 1938*

The economic crisis of the late twenties and the early thirties stopped for the moment any effective action to realize London's green belt, but it barely checked the growth of Greater London. In the late thirties the rate of building rose to a peak and 'development' engulfed whole towns and villages. Some of the Home Counties had already acquired land to prevent the spread of building but it was the London County Council who, at the request of the Regional Planning Committee, took the initiative towards realizing Unwin's 'green girdle'. In 1935 they put forward a scheme (which owed much to Lord Morrison of Lambeth) 'to provide a reserve supply of public open spaces and of recreational areas and to establish a green belt or girdle of open space lands, not necessarily continuous, but as readily accessible from the completely urbanized area of London as practicable'. The Council offered grants to the Councils of the Home Counties and other local authorities towards the cost of acquiring or preserving land for inclusion in this green girdle.

Within a few months arrangements had been made to acquire or preserve about 18,000 acres but it was soon found that the existing powers of the authorities concerned had to be supplemented. A Bill was presented to allow land to be acquired by agreement or declared to be part of the green belt, and to provide



that no such land should be sold or built upon without the consent of the responsible Minister and of the contributing authorities. In due course this Bill became the Green Belt (London and Home Counties) Act, 1938. Altogether, up to the present, about 35,500 acres have been kept open by means of the London County Council's scheme and the 1938 Act.

#### *The Greater London Plan, 1944*

In 1944 Professor Sir Patrick Abercrombie completed an advisory plan for Greater London which he had been invited to prepare by the first Minister of Town and Country Planning. Abercrombie discerned in the apparently amorphous sprawl of London faint indications of a structure of concentric rings and upon this he based his plan (Fig. 2). The main problem was the relief of congestion in the crowded 'inner ring' which he proposed should be chiefly met by the building of new towns and the expansion of existing towns in the fourth or 'outer country ring'. Between these lay the 'suburban ring' which was to remain virtually static, and outside it, the 'green belt ring'. This last he described as a 'zone with sufficient openness to have enabled attempts to be made to create a green belt, a zone in which the communities still maintain some semblance of distinct individuality'. Abercrombie proposed that, with certain exceptions for important manufacturing centres and immediate post-war housing, the expansion of existing communities should be strictly limited and no new centres established.

He saw it in much the same light as did the Scott Committee on Land Utilization in Rural Areas which reported in 1942, that is to say as a belt of open land girdling the built-up area in which in the main the normal rural and other activities appropriate to the district would continue undisturbed. Abercrombie proposed a belt of country about 5 miles deep with some wedges of open space penetrating the built-up area. Much of this land was privately owned and used for farming but most of that which had been bought under the 1938 Act and other publicly owned open spaces were included.

The specific proposals for this green belt were set out on the maps attached to Abercrombie's plan. They were considered in detail by all the authorities concerned and after amendment were embodied in

the development plans of the local planning authorities. In the process the belt was widened to between 6 and 10 miles.

#### *The Town and Country Planning Act, 1947*

London was not the only city in the country to consider the provision of a green belt. Birmingham, Leeds and Sheffield had before the war acquired large areas of land for the purpose or had agreed with the owners that their land should be kept open. But these methods were expensive and it was not until the Town and Country Planning Act of 1947 came into force that the establishment of green belts around the major cities was really possible.

Under this Act any development of land required permission; so local planning authorities no longer needed to buy land to keep it open, they could simply refuse permission for it to be developed. Any resulting compensation was payable by the Government, so green belts could be established without fear of heavy compensation falling on local funds. Although the financial basis of the Act has since been amended these principles have been maintained. Millions of pounds have been spent by the Government on compensation and large areas around London and other great conurbations, which by now would otherwise have been swallowed up, have been kept as open country.

#### *Green belts in the provinces*

Until the middle 1950's the only formal proposal for an encircling green belt was that for London. On 26th April, 1955, the then Minister of Housing and Local Government, Mr. Duncan Sandys, said in the House of Commons:

*'I am convinced that, for the well-being of our people and for the preservation of the countryside, we have a clear duty to do all we can to prevent the further unrestricted sprawl of the great cities.'*

He asked all local authorities concerned to consider the establishment of clearly defined green belts where that was desirable. Since then, a good many proposals have been submitted for green belts in England and Wales. Some have been rejected as inappropriate, some have been approved in principle but not in detail, some have been fully worked out and put to the test of a public local inquiry. Those that have received at least approval in principle are briefly described on pages 22-24 and shown diagrammatically in Fig. 3.

# GREATER LONDON PLAN

## THE FOUR RINGS



- OUTER COUNTRY RING
- GREEN BELT RING
- SUBURBAN RING
- INNER URBAN RING
- THE ADMINISTRATIVE COUNTY OF LONDON

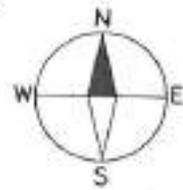
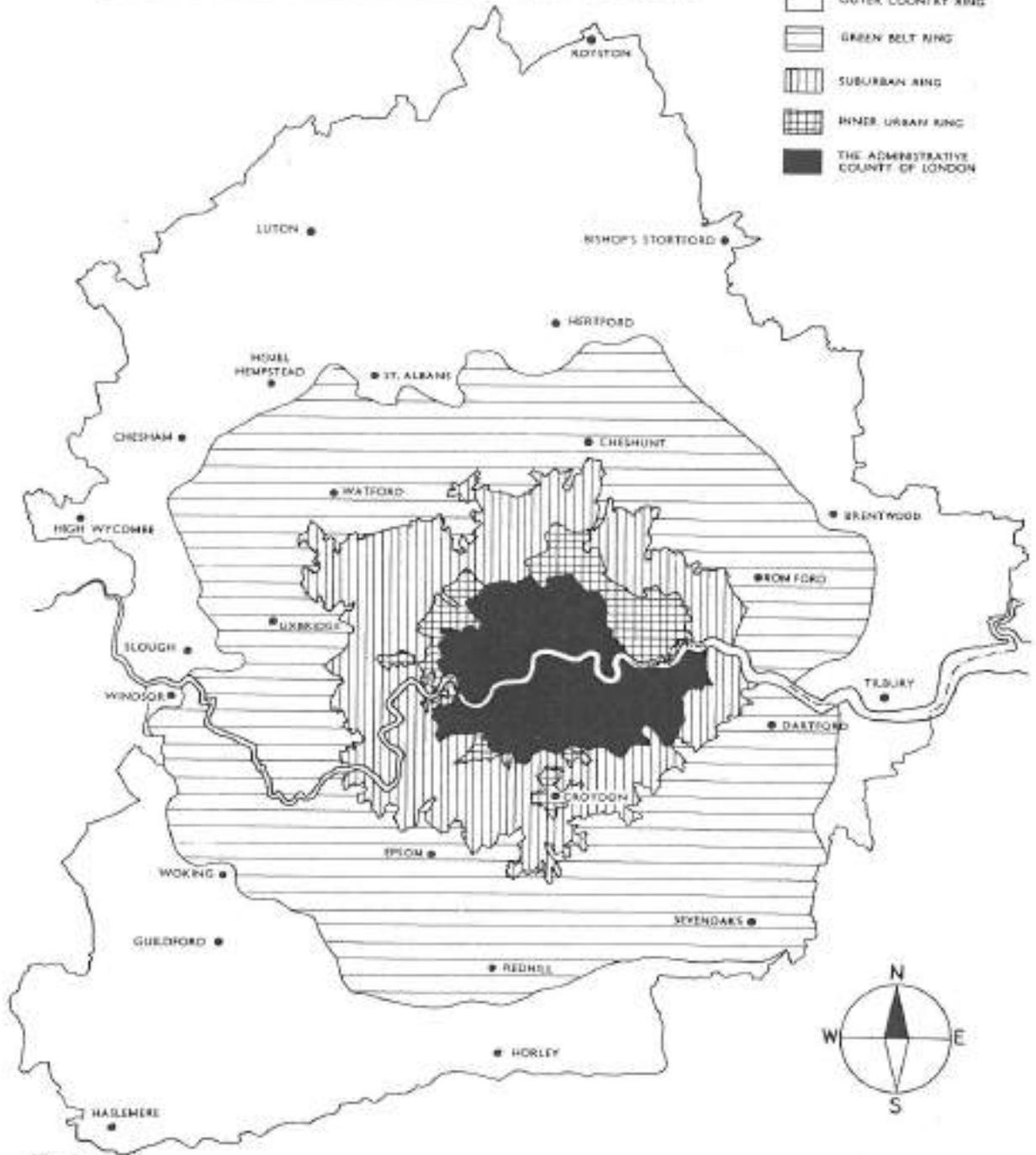


Fig. 2



*Fig. 3. Green Belts in England and Wales as at 1 May, 1962. Proposals which have not been finally approved are subject to modification (see page 10).*

## Restrictions on Building in a Green Belt

The object of including land in a green belt is to keep it permanently open. Consequently there is a clear presumption against any new building and against any new employment which might create a demand for more building.

It is very difficult to get permission to build in a green belt. Anyone who wants to do so must be prepared to show either that the building is required for purposes appropriate to a green belt (e.g. for agriculture) or that there is some special reason why it should be allowed, despite the general presumption to the contrary. A cottage which simply fills a gap in an established village may well be permissible but it is not to be assumed that further houses will be allowed on land adjoining any that already exist. Nor is it enough to show that the building will be inconspicuous or will do no harm on the particular site, though these arguments can reinforce a case which has other merits. The green belt conception implies no further building except where there is a positive argument for allowing it.

Development which does not interfere with the open character of the land may be permissible. Buildings for sport or recreation, hospitals and similar institutions standing in extensive grounds, cemeteries and mineral working may be allowed. In such cases the decision is likely to turn on the need for the proposal as against any damage it will do to the rural appearance of the land.

As it is the intention that a green belt shall have a rural character, restrictions on building are somewhat similar to those applying to the ordinary countryside which lies beyond\*. The main difference is that in the rural areas beyond the green belt it may be necessary at some time to allocate areas for building which may be quite extensive. Within the green belt the presumption is against any new building at any time, subject only to such limited exceptions as are stated in the development plan, or as may be specially approved in accordance with the preceding paragraphs.

## The Use of Land in a Green Belt

The inclusion of land in a green belt does not give the public any rights of access which they would not otherwise enjoy. Most green belts include woods and forests, downs and commons, lakes and rivers, which attract people in large numbers and are maintained wholly or partly for public enjoyment. Though these are often extensive areas, they are a small part

of the green belt as a whole, most of which remains privately owned and is predominantly farmland. Even though the townsman has no right of entry to such land, it is none the less precious to him for its natural beauty and quiet, which can be enjoyed from country lanes and public footpaths†.

Some green belts contain many fine country

\* The policy which the Minister advises for rural areas is set out in a pamphlet 'New Houses in the Country' obtainable free from the local authority.

† County Councils were required by the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, 1949, to carry out a survey of public rights-of-way. Future editions of Ordnance Survey Maps on a scale of 1 inch to 1 mile and 1/25,000 will show these rights-of-way wherever the information is available for the whole sheet.

estates and mansions. Some of these are still private houses while others are used for schools, research institutions, staff colleges, field study centres and the like. Several of them are examples of great architecture and are popular places for a week-end visit. Planning authorities have powers to prevent the demolition of buildings of architectural or historic value but those powers do not help against dry rot and decay. The real problem of the preservation of these buildings is to find an economic use for them and that as often as not includes the use of the park, which may have been laid out in the first place by one of the great landscape architects of the 18th century.

There are, however, some activities which must take place in the green belt and are unsightly, at least for the time being. The working of minerals is an example. Chalk, gravel and clay are needed to make the cement, concrete and bricks of new roads and buildings and they can only be quarried where they occur in nature. The actual operation is temporary, though it may be noisy and intrusive, but the main problem arises after the minerals have been

extracted. Worked-out gravel pits in the river valleys become flooded and are sometimes too remote for economic filling with rubble from the town. Some of them remain deserted for many years and often acquire a scientific value from the rare plants that grow there and the birds that make them their home. Some have been adapted for sailing, fishing and water sports of all kinds, for which there is an increasing demand (Fig. 4). Others have been planted with trees and stocked with wild fowl. Dry pits have sometimes been levelled and cultivated or they have been filled with rubbish and then farmed or used for playing fields.

There are also semi-urban uses of land, such as those concerned with public health, which are necessary to a city and have to be provided in the immediately surrounding countryside. Although their presence in the green belt is not ideal from the point of view of its recreational value they need not be unsightly. Reservoirs, indeed, can be an asset to the landscape and even a sewage disposal works can be assimilated by skilful planting and land formation (Figs. 5A and 5B).



Fig. 4. Sailing in a flooded gravel pit at Wraybury, Buckinghamshire

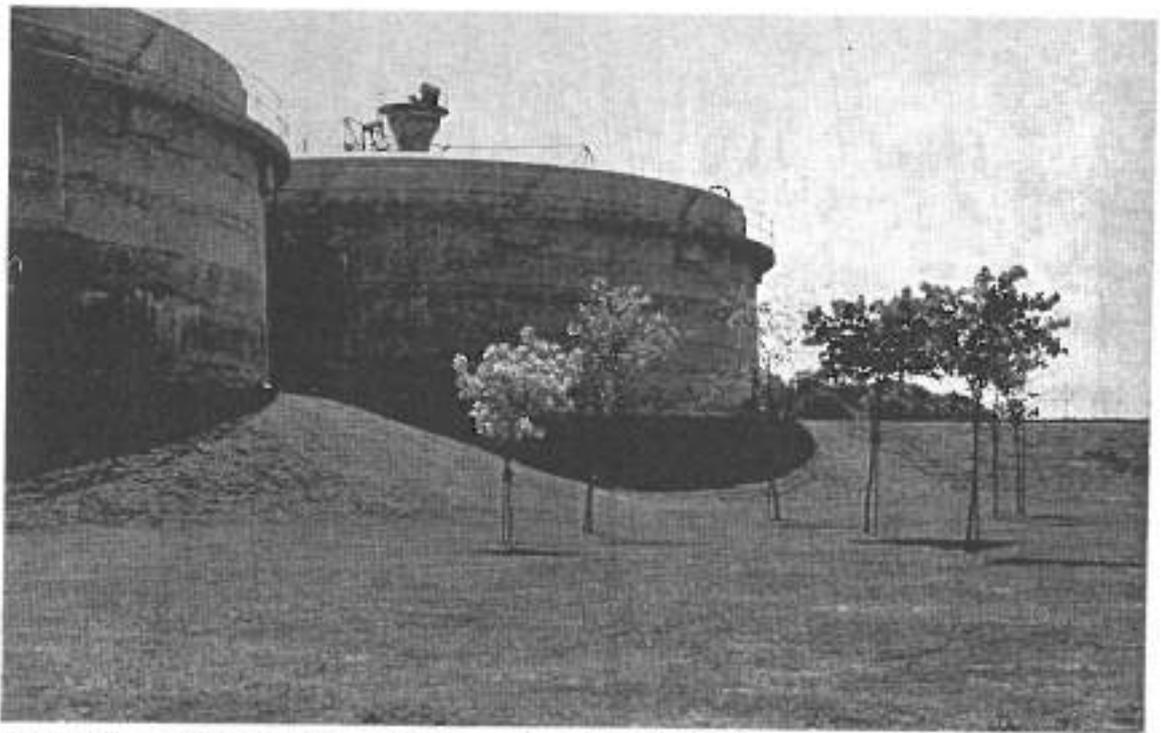
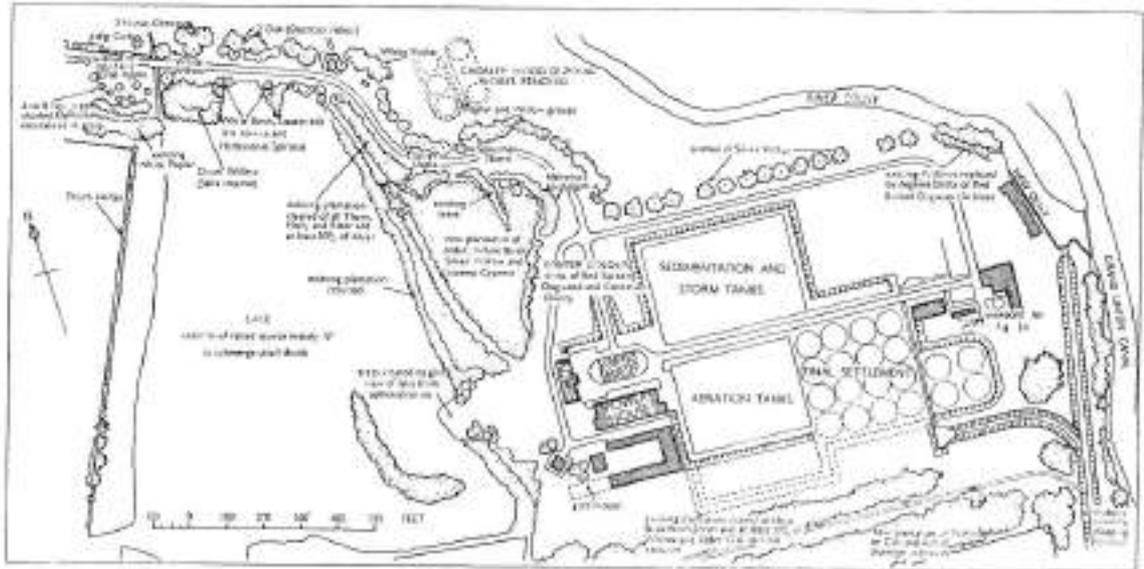


Fig. 5A. Tree planting and surface modelling in 1960 at Maple Lodge Sewage Disposal Works, Rickmansworth  
 Sheila M. Haywood, A.R.I.B.A., F.I.L.A., Landscape Architect

Fig. 5B.



## Defining and Safeguarding a Green Belt

### *The sketch plan*

The first steps in defining a green belt are for the local planning authority to prepare a sketch plan showing the broad nature of the proposal and to submit it to the Minister for approval. If the belt is intended to limit the expansion of a town, or group of towns, the question that will arise is where is the building to take place which would otherwise encroach on the green belt. In a few cases sufficient land can be set aside within or adjoining the built-up area, perhaps by reclaiming derelict land. But as there is an increasing demand for more space for all kinds of urban purposes, it will usually be necessary to provide for building to take place beyond the green belt. The width of the belt has, therefore, to be considered. If it is too narrow, building may just leap the gap and make it no more than an interruption in the urban sprawl. If it is too wide, the alternative locations for building may not be sufficiently attractive and pressure on the green belt may become severe.

The outer boundary of a green belt may with advantage coincide with some easily recognizable topographical feature, such as the crest of a line of hills, a river valley or a main road. A boundary which is so defined finds more ready acceptance from the public than one which relies on a map for its identification.

### *Procedure after the approval of a sketch plan*

When the sketch plan is approved by the Minister, the local planning authority must define the boundaries of the green belt precisely. The proposal is then put forward as a formal amendment to the development plan. At this stage it is open to public criticism and objection, and a public local inquiry is normally held. If, as a result, the Minister intends to modify the proposals, his amendments are also open to public criticism and inquiry. All this takes time and there may be more than one local planning

authority concerned, so several years may pass between the approval of a sketch plan and the final establishment of a green belt through its incorporation in the relevant development plan or plans. To safeguard the proposal during this interval, the Minister has asked local planning authorities to apply a restrictive policy to building in the areas shown as green belt on the sketch plan. The rights of the individual are left to the Minister's protection where any particular issue is brought before him on appeal.

The definition of a green belt in detail will raise some difficult questions, particularly concerning land near the edge of a built-up area or on the fringes of villages within the belt. Broadly, if the local planning authority intend that the land shall remain permanently open, it will be included in the green belt. If not, it will be excluded. But they may not have been able to work out in detail their plan for the development of a small town lying within the green belt and may for the moment have contented themselves with indicating that a Town Map\* will be submitted later. Until this map is approved by the Minister some uncertainty will persist about the exact boundaries of the green belt round the town. Also, the local planning authority may not have thought it necessary or desirable to define any precise limits to the development of some villages lying within the green belt, though they would be ready to agree to a small amount of building. Some authorities have met this situation by showing on the map that these villages are included in the green belt but explaining in the Written Statement of the development plan the policy they will adopt when applications are made for permission to build.

### *Keeping a green belt open*

When a green belt has been incorporated in the development plan of a local planning authority, it is their duty to carry out the policy prescribed in the

\* A 'Town Map' is part of a development plan. It is drawn to a scale of 6" to 1 mile and shows what land is allocated for building and for different uses.

plan. Development plans are firm in general principle but flexible in detail; moreover they have to be reviewed (though not necessarily amended) at least once every five years. Planning authorities are bound to have regard to their development plans when they make a decision on an application for permission to build. If in so doing they intend to depart from the plan to a substantial extent, they must first notify

the Minister, who has the power to intervene if he thinks fit. These are necessary measures to preserve flexibility in detail and to provide for public debate on any substantial amendment to a development plan. They do not imply any wavering on the principle of maintaining a green belt as open country, a principle which has been firmly upheld by local planning authorities and successive Ministers.

## London's Green Belt

### *Its establishment*

The approval in 1959 of the last of the development plans of the Home Counties made it possible to speak of London's green belt as a reality and no longer as an elusive ideal. It was the first to reach that stage and it is the largest, so it merits a full description. Its establishment had been urged for many years and it had been given form in the Greater London Plan of 1944. But there was always the danger that it would give way to the pressure for building. That danger would remain to-day but for the transfer of the liability for compensation from the local planning authorities to the Government. Also the building of new towns and the expansion of existing towns beyond the green belt has eased the pressure for the outward expansion of London. It is these things which make the green belt a reality. No physical changes nor further public ownership of the land are necessarily implied.

### *Proposed extensions*

Since the green belt was established in 1959 proposals for substantial extensions have been put forward, either in the form of sketch plans or as amendments to development plans. At the time of writing, none of these have been finally approved, except for a small area round Ascot, though the Minister has announced his intention to approve an extension of the belt in Buckinghamshire. This and other proposals are shown on the map at the end of the book.

### *Its topography*

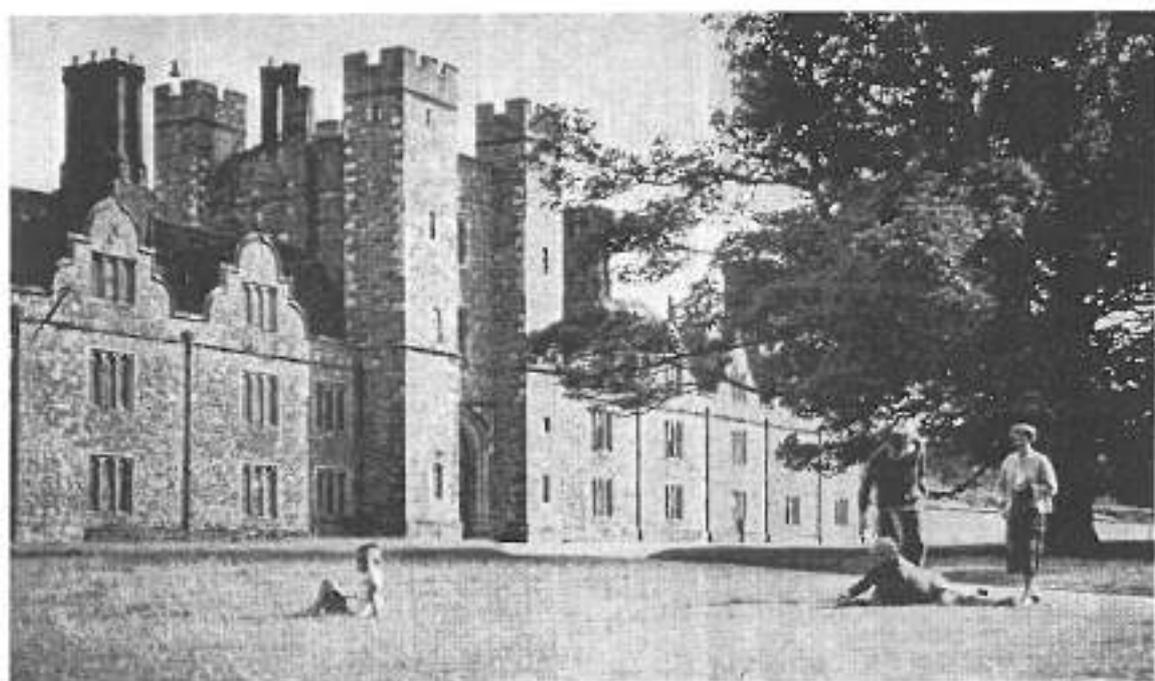
London's green belt is by no means a topographic entity and derives its unity solely from the metropolis which it surrounds. It can, however, be considered in seven sectors, each of which has some coherence and its own character and scenery.

The south-eastern sector has the Darent Valley from Sevenoaks to Dartford as its spine (Fig. 6). It is mainly chalk country with some charming villages and magnificent beech woods. Kent County Council acquired Lullingstone Castle and neighbouring land near Eynsford under the London County Council's 1935 scheme (see page 2), while the National Trust owns the historic Knole House (Fig. 7) south-east of Sevenoaks. Lord Stanhope has recently bequeathed to the nation his house and park at Chevening north-west of the town.

The southern sector is based on the scarp of the North Downs which stretches from Sevenoaks to Guildford with the ancient trackway known as the Pilgrim's Way clinging to its face (Fig. 8). Both the Downs and the greensand hills to the south afford magnificent views over the Weald, while the occasional white scar of a chalk quarry gives a dramatic quality to the view of the Downs themselves when seen from below. The scarp in Surrey and the Leith Hill area to the south-west of Dorking (Fig. 9) has been declared to be an 'area of outstanding natural beauty' by the National Parks Commission. Much of it is publicly owned and visited by many thousands of Londoners on a fine week-end. North of the scarp



*Fig. 6. The Darent Valley, Kent*



*Fig. 7. Knole, an historic mansion near Sevenoaks, Kent.  
Part of the park belongs to the National Trust*

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*Fig. 8. The Buckland Hills near Reigate, Surrey,  
part of the scarp of the North Downs*

*Kenneth Scowen*



*Fig. 9. Leith Hill, the centre of a favourite recreational  
area in Surrey owned by the National Trust*

there is a substantial area of open country, mostly in Kent, which is well-wooded, relatively remote and inaccessible. To the west of this land building has spread out further and the green areas are fragmented, though what is left sometimes affords fine views to the north over London, notably from Banstead and Epsom Downs. The gap cut in the chalk by the River Mole north of Dorking is particularly attractive and of special interest to geographers. It provides the setting for one of the most beautiful stretches of modern road in the country (Fig. 10).

The south-western sector from Leatherhead and Guildford northwards to the Thames and to Sunningdale has no unifying topographical feature. It is relatively flat land drained by the rivers Wey and Mole which in their meanderings towards the Thames afford many opportunities for canoeing, fishing and other water sports. It contains a number of well-known and much frequented commons, such

as Bookham, Wisley (Fig. 11), Ockham, Esher and Chobham, as well as Horsell Common, which H. G. Wells chose as the place where the Martians landed in 'The War of the Worlds'. There are several country houses and parks associated with famous people either as occupants or architects and landscape architects, including Claremont, Esher, designed by 'Capability' Brown for Lord Clive (Fig. 12), and Painshill, one of the earliest of the great 18th-century landscape gardens. Valuable green wedges thrust inwards to the Thames west of Molesey and to the Kingston by-pass at Hook. On the other hand the sector is almost severed by a succession of towns along the main railway line to Woking.

The western sector from Sunningdale to Gerrards Cross is the most seriously fragmented of all. Much of it lies in the flood plain of the Thames where the competition for land is intense and where the green belt serves mainly to prevent the coalescence of



*Fig. 10. The Dorking-Leatherhead road from Box Hill.  
A nature study group in the foreground*

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*Fig. 11. Wisley Common, Surrey. A favourite picnic place adjoining the Portsmouth Road*

*Kenneth Scowen*



*Fig. 12. Claremont, Esher. An historic house, once owned by Queen Victoria and now a girls' school*



*Fig. 13. Runnymede and West Middlesex from the Commonwealth Air Forces Memorial at Cooper's Hill*

neighbouring communities or to protect high quality farmland and rich gravel reserves. Major sources of employment on the western outskirts of London, including Slough and London Airport, have created demands for housing and for residential caravan sites, while large areas are taken up by gravel pits and the reservoirs of the Metropolitan Water Board. On the right bank of the Thames near Runnymede the land rises and the Commonwealth Air Forces Memorial at Cooper's Hill affords a fine panorama reaching from Windsor Castle to the centre of London (Fig. 13). Immediately to the west, Windsor Great Park provides an effective reinforcement to a rather thin sector of the green belt. North of Slough on a series of gravel terraces lying in a bite out of the Chiltern chalk there is some well-wooded country, much of it secured by acquisition for public enjoyment, including Burnham Beeches and Black Park. Here also is Stoke Poges.

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The spine of the north-western sector is the valley of the River Colne, flowing from Watford to Uxbridge on its way to join the Thames. The land beyond is for the most part Chiltern chalk downland, intersected by the valleys of the Misbourne, Chess (Fig. 14) and Gade (Fig. 15). There are few good roads between these valleys and the narrow tortuous lanes and occasional steep gradients help to maintain the remoteness of the area. A tongue of development along the railway from Rickmansworth to Amersham interrupts the continuity of the green belt but not so badly as the almost continuous ribbon of building along the Gade Valley from Watford to Hemel Hempstead. A substantial part of this sector lies within the curve of the Colne Valley, mainly in Middlesex around Harfield and Ruislip. Here is some of the land bought by the County Council under the 1938 Act and earlier, as well as Moor Park, in Hertfordshire (Fig. 16).



Central Press Photos Ltd.

*Fig. 14. Latimer, in  
the Chess Valley,  
Buckinghamshire*



E. W. Tattersall



*Fig. 15. The Grand Union Canal in the Gade Valley near Watford*

The northern sector from Watford to Hoddesdon is for the most part gently rolling land on the London clay. A large proportion has been protected from building by acquisition or by the payment of compensation under the 1947 Act. The inner boundary is prominently marked by the Elstree ridge and, north of Barnet, Dyrham Park and Wrotham Park maintain a sharp distinction between town and country. Further east, Hadley Common, Enfield Chase and Trent Park (Fig. 17) interpose a firm barrier against the outward spread of London. Near Hatfield the green belt comes up to the Lea Valley and includes Hatfield Park, with its historic mansion. Immediately to the east of the Park there is a pleasant rural area around Essendon and Bayford, which extends through Broxbourne Woods (Fig. 18) as far as the valley of the Lea where it flows southward to join the Thames.

The north-east sector comprises the remainder of the green belt from the Lea Valley to the lower Thames. Perhaps its most prominent feature is Epping Forest (Fig. 19), more than 5,000 acres of woodland vested in the City of London Corporation in 1878 after a long struggle against its enclosure. Between the Forest on its ridge and the Lea Valley

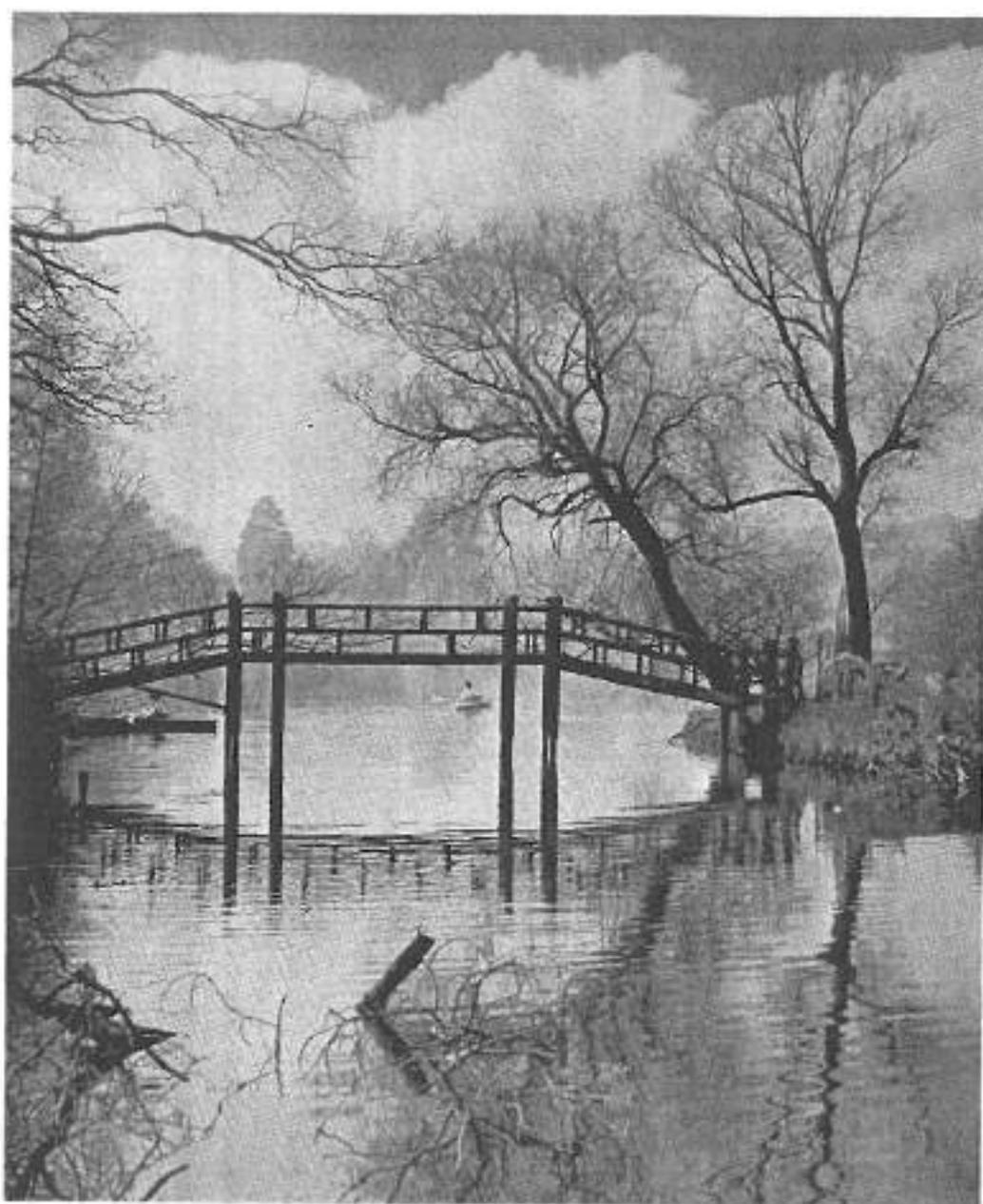


*Fig. 16. Moor Park, Hertfordshire, now a golf club house*

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there is a fine wedge of open country stretching from Harlow nearly to Chingford and including land once the manor of King Harold, who is said to have been buried at Waltham Abbey (Fig. 20). This land, as well as that on the western bank, is important for market gardening and glasshouse cultivation. To the

east of Epping Forest there is a tongue of building stretching out along the extended Central Line as far as Epping but beyond this lies the Roding Valley, a deep wedge of open country penetrating to Chigwell and through Hainault Forest to Barkingside. Building has extended outwards almost continuously



*Fig. 17. The lake at Trent Park, Middlesex, part of the grounds of a teachers' training college.*



*Fig. 18. In Broxbourne Woods, Hertfordshire*

as far as Brentwood along the main line and road to Chelmsford, but south of the town the land is fairly open and a large part is low-lying, drained to the Thames by the Mar Dyke. The green belt stops short of the riverside and the chalk quarries which are associated with the manufacture of cement (Fig. 21).

To sum up, London's green belt is an irregular and broken ring of open country around the great city, the use of which contributes in one form or another to the well-being of Londoners. It is as necessary to-day, but for different reasons, as in the days when London was dependent on the agriculture of the surrounding countryside. Increased leisure, higher standards of living, the greater strain of urban life and a growing desire for knowledge and understanding of the arts and sciences combine to invite Londoners to appreciate more and more the value of their green belt.



*Fig. 19. In Monk Wood, Epping Forest J. A. Brinkley*



*Fig. 20. Waltham Abbey, Essex, founded in the 11th century*



*Fig. 21. Near Gray, Essex. In the distance  
the chimneys of the cement works*

## Provincial Green Belts

The provincial green belts are at various stages in the procedure for their establishment. In some cases, different parts of the same green belt are at different stages because more than one local planning authority is concerned. Those that have received at least approval in principle are briefly described below and shown diagrammatically in Fig. 3.

*Tyneside.* This is not a continuous green belt around the Tyneside conurbation. In Northumberland it consists of a substantial area to the west and north of Newcastle which embraces attractive country on both banks of the Tyne as far up as Hexham (Fig. 22). The Minister has announced his intention to approve this proposal. In Durham a green belt to separate Tyneside from Wearside has been approved in principle.

*York.* A green belt encircling York has been approved in principle. The purpose is to safeguard the special character of the city, which might be endangered by unrestricted expansion. The bulk of the land in the green belt is good and pleasant farmland.

*West Riding conurbation.* The purposes of this green belt are first to prevent the various cities and towns from coalescing, and secondly to girdle the conurbation as a whole. Much of the undeveloped land between the towns has been marred and fragmented by scattered housing, industry and mineral working, as well as by disused pit heaps and derelict industrial sites. Much of the countryside surrounding the conurbation is, by contrast, attractive and even magnificent, particularly to the west and north.

*Sheffield-Rotherham.* This green belt is intended to prevent the merging of Sheffield and Rotherham with Barnsley in the north, and with Chesterfield in the south, as well as to resist the spread of building into the open countryside east of the River Rother. Sheffield was one of the first cities to consider the provision of a green belt but the need to expand has eaten into some of the land which was provisionally selected in 1938. There is now much need of re-development, resulting in pressure for peripheral

expansion, mainly to the south-east towards and into Derbyshire.

*Merseyside-Manchester.* A green belt around Liverpool is proposed from the coast near Southport to the north bank of the Mersey. It is 6 to 8 miles wide except where it adjoins the Liverpool - St. Helens road. Another part continues eastwards around Widnes and Warrington towards Manchester. The main purpose is to shape the expansion of Liverpool and other towns in this area and to maintain open breaks between those which are tending to coalesce. North, east and west of Manchester the green belt is severely fragmented and is not generally attractive landscape. Much of it is low quality grassland but there is almost every other type of land use which can be found on the fringes of a large town. Some of it also is derelict. The eastern boundary joins the Peak District National Park. South of Manchester the green belt is quite different; it is continuous and part of the Cheshire Plain, which is pleasant scenery and mostly good quality farmland, with large areas of parkland and several golf courses.

*Wirral - Chester.* The green belt extends down the centre and west of the Wirral peninsula as far as Ellesmere Port and continues around Chester to the Welsh border. Sketch plan proposals have been submitted, though they have not yet been approved, for its completion in Flintshire. The purpose is to shape the expansion of the Merseyside towns and to avoid prejudice to the character of Chester which might follow from its fusion with neighbouring urban areas. The scenery is attractive and there are magnificent views across the estuary of the Dee to the Welsh hills beyond.

*Stoke-on-Trent.* This is a continuous green belt around Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle-under-Lyme designed to limit the spread of the urban area and to prevent coalescence with nearby places such as Stone, Congleton and Leek. It consists mainly of farmland and is attractive scenery. The north-eastern boundary is only separated from the Peak District National

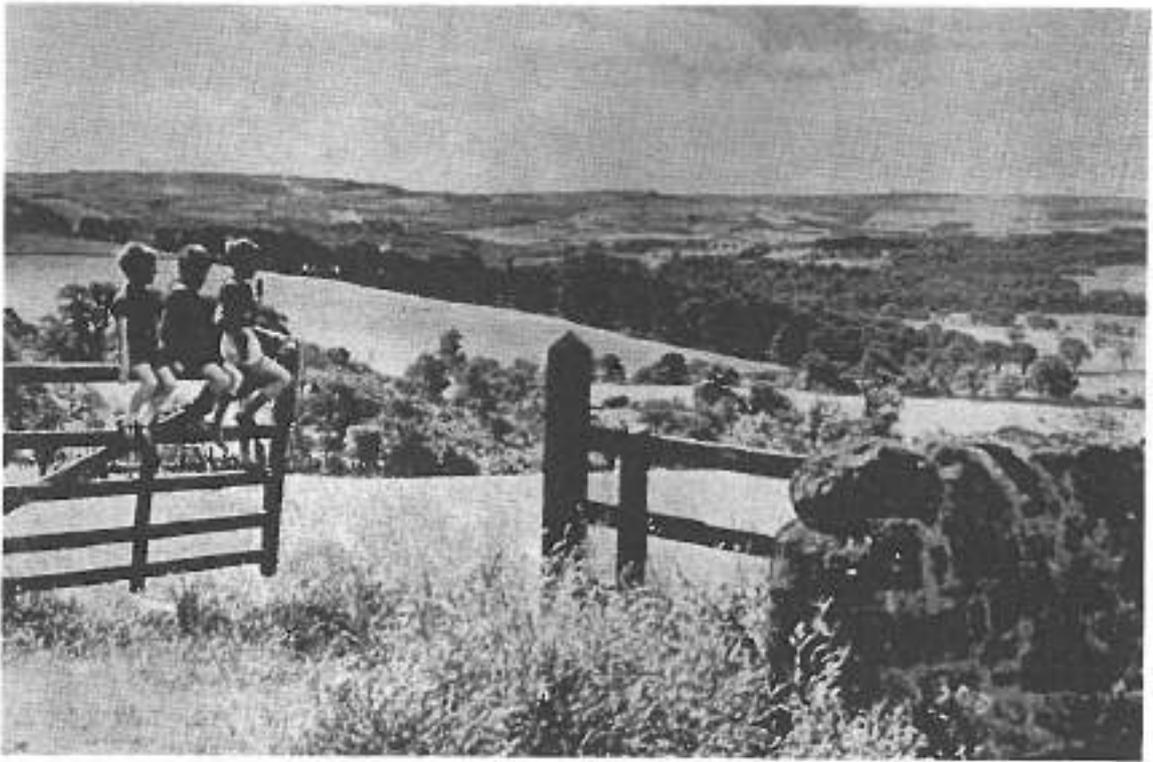


Fig. 22. Near Bywell, Northumberland. Looking south over the valley of the River Tyne in the Tyneside green belt

Park by a strip of land which is rated as being of high landscape value.

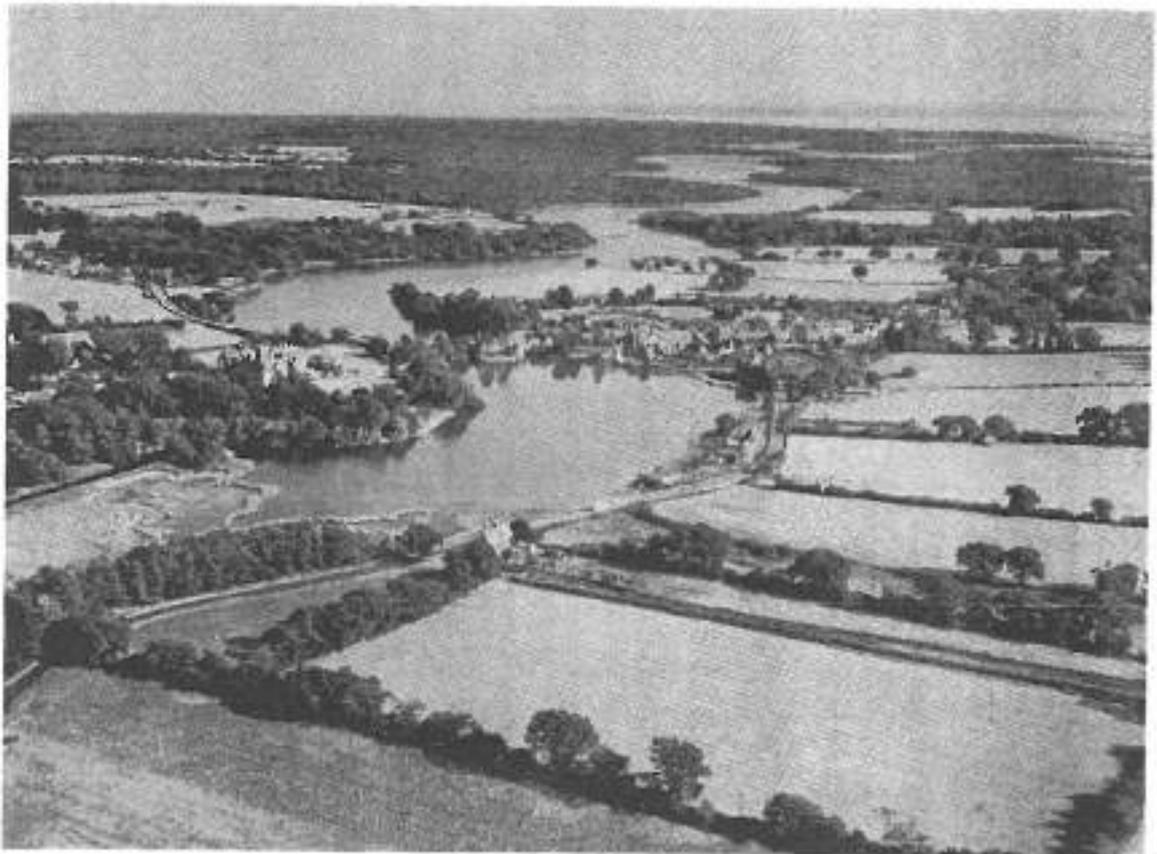
*Nottingham and Derby.* A gap of only two or three miles of open land separates Nottingham from Derby and the primary purpose of this green belt is to keep this land open. But whilst the Derby part is mainly confined to this purpose, the Nottingham part entirely surrounds the city, separating it also from Mansfield and from many of the scattered colliery villages. Much of the landscape north of the Trent is marred by collieries and sporadic development and open-cast mining has greatly affected the appearance of the Derbyshire part. The land south of the Trent, on the other hand, is mainly pleasant to see and good for farming.

*Birmingham and Coventry.* This green belt fulfils two principal purposes; first, to restrain the outward growth of the main built-up areas and, secondly, to keep them apart. It separates towns such as Redditch, Bromsgrove, Kidderminster and Stafford from the West Midlands conurbation and helps to maintain the separate identity of Nuneaton and

Bedworth. The land is almost all agricultural and its scenery is pleasant in varying degree. In the northern tip is Cannock Chase, which has been declared by the National Parks Commission to be an 'area of outstanding natural beauty'; that is to say that, while not having the outstanding scenic qualities of a National Park, the landscape is of more than local value and significance.

*Gloucester and Cheltenham.* The purpose of this green belt is to separate these two towns which are tending to coalesce. The land is almost all pleasant agricultural land at the foot of the Cotswold escarpment.

*Bristol and Bath.* All the three reasons for the establishment of a green belt apply in this case. The purposes are to restrict the outward expansion of Bristol, to separate Bristol from Bath and to protect the special character of the latter city. The landscape in the southern part of the green belt is very fine and the escarpment north of Bristol overlooking the River Severn is also attractive. The remainder is mainly pleasant farmland.



*Fig. 23. Beaulieu and the Beaulieu River  
in the Hampshire Coast green belt*

*Oxford.* Oxford has become well known as a city with a dual personality. It is famous both as a university town and as a prosperous manufacturing centre. Its character and setting have been impaired by its phenomenal growth during the last forty years and the green belt seeks to prevent it from growing any bigger. The landscape is not outstandingly attractive but it is intimate in scale and gentle in character. Most of it is average to good land used for mixed farming.

*Cambridge.* Cambridge has also suffered from being both a university and a manufacturing town, though to a lesser extent than Oxford. There is a settled policy to limit its size, together with that of the surrounding villages, to 125,000 population. The green belt is one of the tools used to implement that

policy and so help to preserve the city's character. The land is used for arable farming and is mainly flat but some higher ground to the west and the Gog Magog Hills to the south are also included.

*Hampshire Coast.* The Minister has announced his intention to approve this green belt, though with modifications to the original submission. Its purpose is to keep apart the three main urban areas centred on Bournemouth, Southampton and Portsmouth. It is generally attractive country which includes the New Forest, the north shore of the Solent lying to the west of Southampton Water (Fig. 23) and the popular yachting centre on the Hamble River. The north-eastern tip joins the declared 'area of outstanding natural beauty' which continues over the South Downs as far as Eastbourne.

## The Implications of a Green Belt

### *The pressure on green belts*

There is a strong demand for more space for urban living. One of the many reasons is that despite pre-war forecasts of an eventual decline, the population of the country is still increasing. The number of separate families is growing even faster. There is plenty of work and greater prosperity, so that more people can afford separate and better homes. More land is required for new schools, hospitals and other public purposes, as well as for new roads and car parks to cope with the increasing traffic. If this need for more urban land encounters the restrictions implicit in a green belt, there are bound to be sharp increases in the value of building land and pressure to encroach on the green belts. Planning authorities and successive Ministers alike have resisted this pressure, have from time to time reiterated their intention to maintain the green belts and have supported their words by day to day decisions. They have done so while fully realizing that land must be provided elsewhere to meet those needs which are not to be allowed in the green belt.

### *The allocation of building land*

The land that is at any time available for development is defined on the relevant development plans which local planning authorities (county councils and county borough councils) were required to prepare by the Town and Country Planning Act, 1947. Sufficient building land was allocated in these plans to meet estimated needs for twenty years ahead but in some places this land has been used up quicker than was anticipated. Pressure to build on land that was not allocated has mounted and land values have increased sharply wherever permission to build could be got. This has led to many requests for more land to be made available, often at the expense of a green belt.

### *Review of development plans*

Development plans have to be reviewed at least once in every five years after their initial approval. Such a review provides an opportunity to allocate more

land for building if there is not enough already. In 1960 the Minister thought it advisable to issue a circular to local planning authorities on the subject. He said that he was anxious to see more land provided for development (where that did not conflict with important planning objectives) and to encourage fuller use of land within towns. Where a town was encircled by a green belt, adequate land should be selected beyond it, both for house building and for factories and offices. In this way employment as well as people would be encouraged to move out.

### *The journey to work*

Fears have been expressed that the effect of a green belt will be to make people travel longer distances in their daily journey to work. This will, indeed, be so if the outward movement of people in search of homes is not accompanied by a similar outward movement of employment. There are people who, though working in London or some other great city, choose to live at a distance and are prepared for the inconvenience and expense of a long daily journey. But most prefer work near their home if it can be got and the aim of policy is to bring about this freedom of choice.

### *Decentralization*

The problem is to reduce employment in the heart of the conurbation and to encourage its growth in towns which, though partly dependent on the great city, are independent to the extent of providing sufficient local employment for the people who live there (Fig. 24), as well as shops and opportunities for entertainment and recreation. Looked at in this way, a green belt is seen as a means of shaping the expansion of a city on a regional scale and not just an attempt to combat the forces making for growth. The maintenance of the green belt is therefore closely linked with decentralization, which was the kernel of the Greater London Plan and is still Government planning policy for London and other great cities.

### *The green belt and the Greater London Plan*

London provides the greatest test of the success of



*Fig. 24. Offices in the Town Square at Stevenage, Hertfordshire*  
26

*Norman Smith*

this policy. Abercrombie's plan, simply stated, was to reconstruct the crowded inner areas of London in phase with a move of people and industrial employment to new towns and other places beyond the green belt. The plan had to be based on a number of assumptions, which seemed reasonable enough at the time when they were made. One of these was that no new industry would be admitted to London and the Home Counties except in special cases; another was that in consequence, and according with national trends, the population of the region would not increase. It followed that the problem as Abercrombie saw it was to redistribute, mostly within the region, the existing number of people and jobs.

He could not have foreseen the great increase in office employment in London. Rising international trade, the need to be near overseas banks, shippers and underwriters, the greater complexity of business and the larger units in which it is concentrated, have all made their contribution. Many offices were destroyed during the war and it was some time before scarce resources could be spared for new office building. When that time came, there was not only the destruction to be replaced and fifteen years of inactivity to be made good but also this extra demand to be met. The result was an office building boom.

Planning authorities and successive Ministers have tried hard to restrain it and but for their efforts employment in London would have increased even faster than it has. The Government have set an example; many civil servants in headquarters offices have been accommodated in various places outside London, including some of the northern towns. But the public authorities need the co-operation of firms now carrying out work in London which could be done outside. Quite recently, the difficulty of recruiting staff, the high rents of office space in central London and the wear and tear of peak-hour travel have led to some decentralization. The movement is gathering momentum, as can be seen from the property advertisements page of daily newspapers.

Nor could Abercrombie have foreseen that national population trends would change after the war and that there would be a steady increase, of which the London region would have more than its share. In the event, the population of the region increased by nearly 350,000 between 1952 and 1960, and in this period there has been a steady outward movement of population both within the region and across its boundaries. The number of people living in the County of London has declined at an average rate of about 20,000 a year for some time past; and there are fewer people living in the other inner areas.

In the face of the increase of employment in the centre of London and the outward movement of population, there may be some temptation to say that the Greater London Plan has failed and to give up the struggle. Nothing could do more injustice to the very real achievements of the last fifteen years. Migration to London from the west and north, which was such a feature of the pre-war years, has been reduced to a mere fraction of what it was. Eight new towns with their own factories, shops and offices, have been established beyond London's green belt and some of them are nearing completion. Existing small towns have been and are being expanded under the Town Development Act, 1952, by arrangement between the London authorities, primarily the London County Council, and the local authorities concerned.

These achievements, however far they fall short of hopes or expectations, have made possible the definition of the green belt and its successful defence against numerous attempts at encroachment. To sacrifice it and revert to peripheral expansion would mean the loss of much of London's precious recreation space and the open country being pushed further away from those who live in the centre. London would become larger and more suburban; more roads and railways would have to be built and more time would be spent in travelling between home, work-place, shops and places of recreation.

## The Maintenance and Improvement of a Green Belt

### *The appearance of a green belt*

Once a green belt is defined the aim will usually be to maintain its rural appearance. Any buildings which are built there should be in keeping with the character of the area and this applies not only in the green belt itself but in any villages which lie within it, even though they may be formally excluded.

The powers of planning authorities to ensure that new building is in keeping with the rural appearance of the green belt are limited. They can say what shall not be done but they cannot say what shall be done, except as a condition of permission for some development or if they acquire the land themselves. Their principal weapon, the control of development, is essentially negative and however well it may be administered it is no substitute for good design in the first place. Planning authorities can control the external appearance of buildings and most of them take great care and trouble in doing so, but no statutory power can elicit a good design from a bad designer. Those who build have the responsibility of ensuring that what they build will be good to look at and nowhere is this more important than in green belt villages. But this does not mean that design of novel character is necessarily out of place. Authorities in deciding what to allow and what to reject have to distinguish between what is indifferent or illiterate and what is merely unusual. Designs which appear to conflict with what is there already often arouse indignation. This is quite understandable for few people welcome change, particularly in such an evocative setting as a village and a green belt village at that. But most villages and small towns contain buildings of all ages, which differ very much in character from one another but enrich each other by their contrasting styles and materials (Fig. 25). So the modern building, if it is honestly designed, will in its turn enrich the village and should be welcomed. Attempts to maintain harmony by copying the styles of the past are seldom successful.

Minor structures, such as buildings incidental to the enjoyment of a dwelling house, and most agricultural buildings, are ordinarily exempt from plan-

ning control and the Minister is generally reluctant to withdraw these exemptions. Those who construct such buildings are relied upon to use care in their setting and design, so that they do not intrude on landscape or village. Nowhere is this more important than in a green belt. Nor is it only private developers who need to exercise care. Public authorities responsible for providing water, power, sewerage and roads carry their own responsibilities. They can do much by attention to detail and by the employment of skilled designers to lessen the impact of their works on the countryside. The rural appearance of a green belt is easily destroyed by man-made objects used for public works, some of which might be appropriate enough in a nearby suburb. Concrete kerbs, lamp posts and fences, tangles of overhead wires, standard traffic bollards and the treatment of an open space as though it were a town park are some examples.

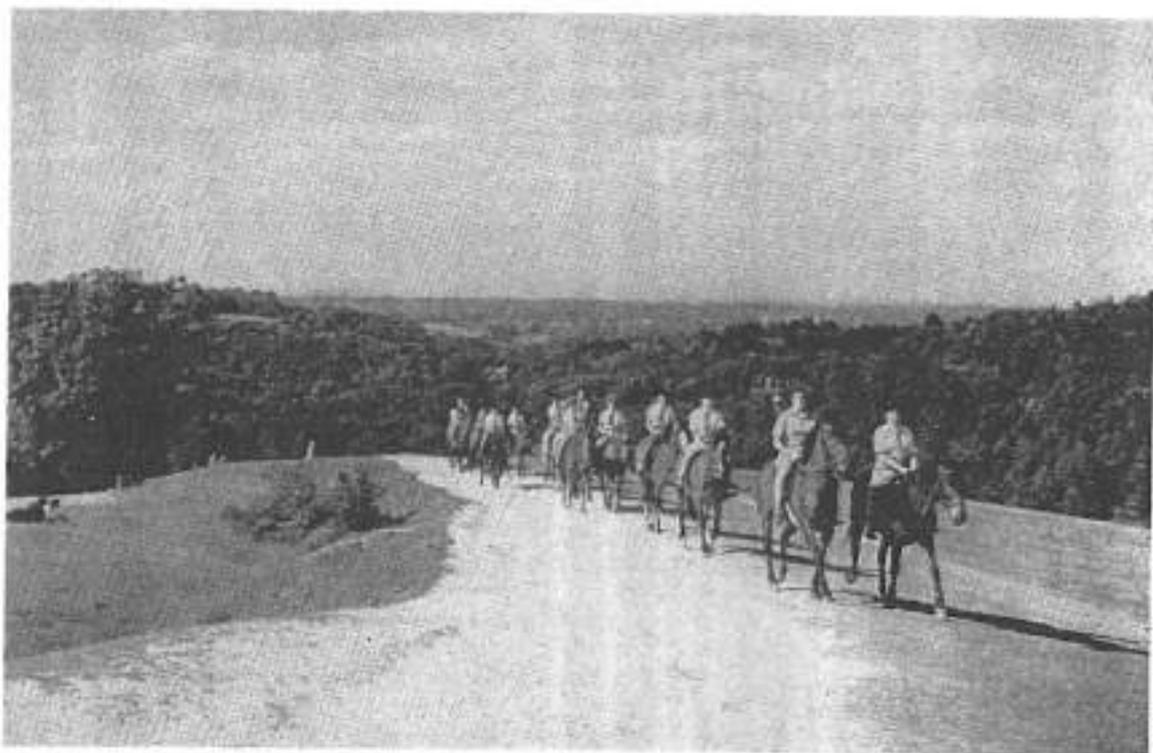
Public authorities of one kind or another can do a lot to maintain and improve the appearance of a green belt and its usefulness for recreation. They can acquire land for public enjoyment, construct car parks, plant trees and open up views over the countryside from some favoured vantage point. They can remove disused buildings and reclaim derelict land. They can fill worked-out mineral pits with refuse and restore the land to use. They can improve and maintain footpaths and bridle ways and provide sign-posts for those that have been determined as public rights of way.

### *The role of the individual*

The appearance of the green belt depends also on the activities of numberless individuals. The planning authority can prevent buildings being erected but they cannot ensure that land is used for agriculture; they can stop trees being felled or fine buildings from being demolished, but they cannot ensure the proper maintenance of woodlands or the repair of a building which is not a public danger. The residents and landowners in the green belt can contribute substantially to its maintenance or destruction, but



*Fig. 25. Contrasts in scale and architecture at Farnham, Surrey*



*Fig. 26. Riders at Box Hill, Surrey*



*Fig. 27. The River Thames at Laleham. An everyday scene in summer*

its appearance depends to an even greater extent on the relations between those who live and work there and those who use it for their recreation, for riding, cycling, walking, motoring, fishing, sailing, boating, shooting or hunting (Figs. 26 & 27). Many of these activities imply some conflict with agriculture. The very presence of large numbers of town dwellers, even if they scrupulously follow the Country Code\*, means some disturbance. If there is trespass or pilfering, the farmer will be antagonized. Furthermore, the townsman requires some concessions from the farmer for his satisfaction in the beauty of the landscape, such as care in the siting and design of farm buildings and the preservation of trees. So the maintenance of the green belt is not only a matter of control by the planning authority but also a question of how it is used by the townsman in his search for recreation and of how the land is managed by public and private landowners.

The public are entitled to expect that, once a green belt is established, the authorities concerned will effectively carry out any policies necessary to its maintenance as a belt of open country and to the enhancement of its rural appearance. But public authorities in a democratic country cannot for long pursue a policy which does not have public support. So the future of a green belt depends in the end on public opinion. This requires understanding of the issues involved. The function of a green belt as a place for the recreation and enjoyment of the townsman is well understood. It differs from, though it does not conflict with, its function as a means of shaping the expansion of a town or group of towns. The former may have more appeal but the latter is the primary purpose of a green belt. The aim of this book has been to explain why this is so and thus to contribute to that informed public opinion on which the future depends.

\* Country Code for Visitors to the Countryside, 1951. H.M. Stationery Office. Price 6d.

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# ANNEXE I iii

PLANNING POLICY GUIDANCE 2

1988

**PLANNING POLICY GUIDANCE:**

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PLANNING POLICY GUIDANCE- DEPARTMENT OF  
THE ENVIRONMENT PPG**GREEN BELTS**6509.252400 1988 2  
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1. The Government attaches great importance to Green Belts, which have been an essential element of planning policy for more than three decades. The objectives of Green Belt policy and the related development control policies set out in 1955 remain valid today.

2. The first official proposal 'to provide a reserve supply of public open spaces and of recreational areas and to establish a green belt or girdle of open space' was made by the Greater London Regional Planning Committee in 1935. New provisions for compensation in the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act allowed local authorities to incorporate green belt proposals in their first development plans. The codification of Green Belt policy and its extension to areas other than London came in 1955 with an historic circular inviting local planning authorities to consider the establishment of Green Belts. That process of local initiation and central approval continues today. It has resulted in the approval of 15 separate Green Belts, varying in size from 1,200,000 acres around London to just 2,000 acres at Burton-on-Trent.

3. The Green Belts approved through structure plans now cover approximately 4,500,000 acres, 14% of England. The general extent and location of the designated areas are given in the table and map overleaf.

**Purposes of Green Belts**

4. Green Belts have five purposes:

- to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- to safeguard the surrounding countryside from further encroachment;
- to prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another;
- to preserve the special character of historic towns; and
- to assist in urban regeneration.

5. Green Belts also have a positive role in providing access to open countryside for the urban population. Such access may be for active outdoor sports or for passive recreation. Outdoor leisure pursuits are

likely to occupy an increasing proportion of the Green Belts if, as currently expected, the land needed for food production decreases.

6. Green Belts often contain areas of attractive landscape, but the quality of the rural landscape is not a material factor in their designation or in their continued protection.

**Designation of Green Belts**

7. The essential characteristic of Green Belts is their permanence and their protection must be maintained as far as can be seen ahead.

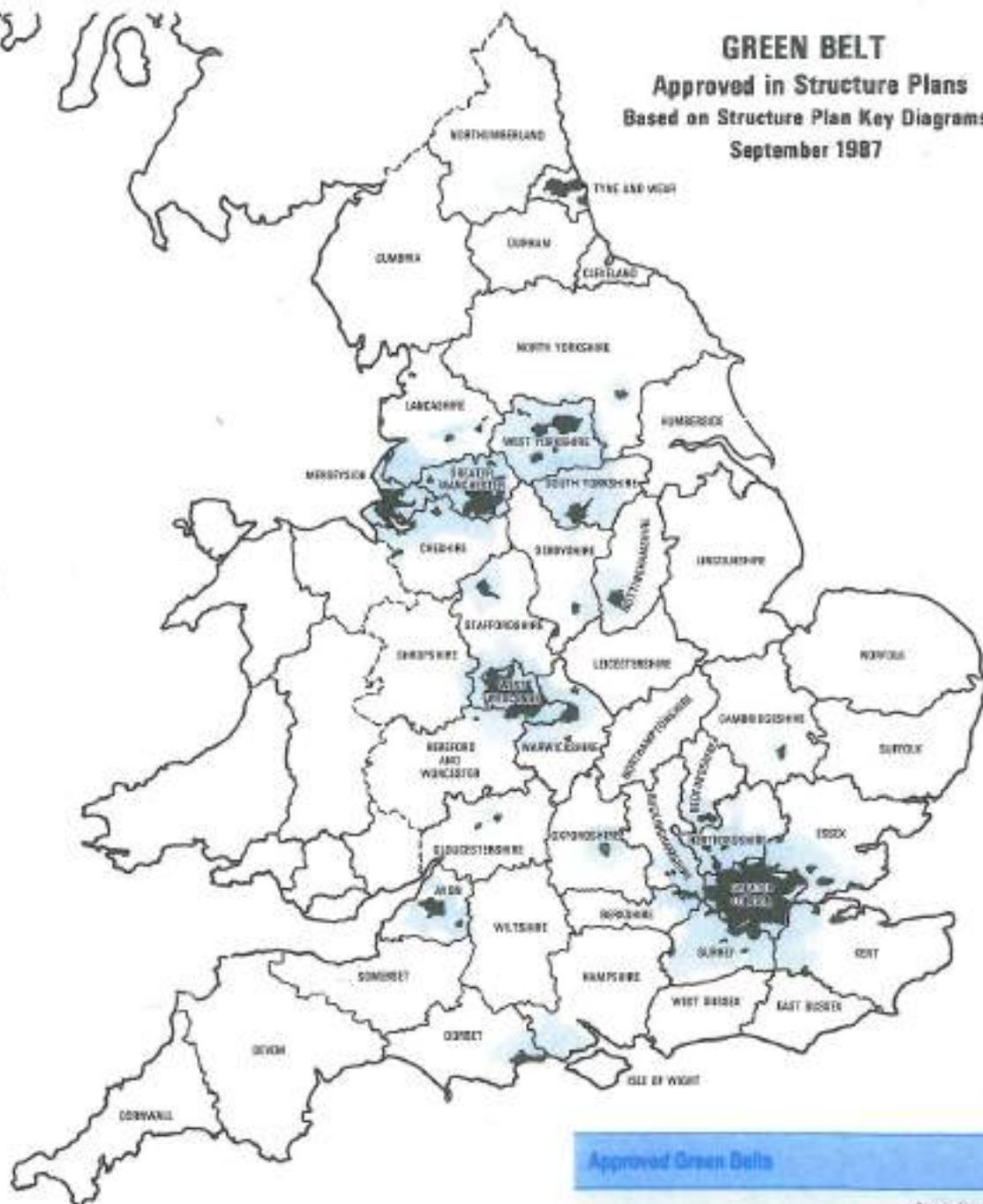
8. Green Belts are established through development plans. Their general extent has now been fixed through the approval of structure plans and many detailed boundaries have been set in local plans and in old development plans.

9. Once the general extent of a Green Belt has been approved it should be altered only in exceptional circumstances. If such an alteration is proposed the Secretary of State will wish to be satisfied that the authority has considered opportunities for development within the urban areas contained by and beyond the Green Belt. Similarly, detailed Green Belt boundaries defined in adopted local plans or earlier approved development plans should be altered only exceptionally. Detailed boundaries should not be amended or development allowed merely because the land has become derelict. On the outer edge of a Green Belt, readily recognisable features, such as roads, streams or belts of trees, should be used to define the boundaries.

10. Where detailed Green Belt boundaries have not yet been defined, local planning authorities are urged to complete this task. It is necessary to establish boundaries that will endure and they should be carefully drawn so as not to include land which it is unnecessary to keep permanently open. Otherwise there is a risk that encroachment on the Green Belt will have to be allowed in order to accommodate future development.

11. When local planning authorities prepare new or revised structure and local plans, any proposals affecting Green Belts should be related to a time scale which is longer than that normally adopted for

**GREEN BELT**  
**Approved in Structure Plans**  
**Based on Structure Plan Key Diagrams**  
**September 1987**



**Approved Green Belts**

	Acres (approx)
Tyne & Wear	200,000
Lancaster & Fylde Coast	5,750
York	50,000
South & West Yorkshire	600,000
Greater Manchester, Central Lancs, Merseyside, Wirral	750,000
Stoke-on-Trent	125,000
Nottingham, Derby	200,000
Burton - Swadincote	2,000
West Midlands	650,000
Cambridge	26,550
Gloucester, Cheltenham	20,000
Oxford	100,000
London	1,200,000
Avon	150,000
SW Hampshire/SE Dorset	220,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,495,300</b>

other aspects of the plan. They should satisfy themselves that Green Belt boundaries will not need to be altered at the end of the plan period. In some cases this will mean safeguarding land between the urban area and the Green Belt which may be required to meet longer term development needs.

### Control over development

12. The general policies controlling development in the countryside apply with equal force in Green Belts but there is, in addition, a general presumption against inappropriate development within them.

13. Inside a Green Belt, approval should not be given, except in very special circumstances, for the construction of new buildings or for the change of use of existing buildings for purposes other than agriculture and forestry, outdoor sport, cemeteries, institutions standing in extensive grounds, or other uses appropriate to a rural area.

14. Structure and local planning policies should make no reference to the possibility of allowing other development in exceptional circumstances. Nor should the visual amenities of the Green Belt be injured by proposals for development within or conspicuous from the Green Belt which, although they would not prejudice its main purpose, might be inappropriate by reason of their siting, materials or design.

15. Minerals can be worked only where they are found. Their extraction need not be incompatible with Green Belt objectives, provided that high environmental standards are maintained and that the site is well restored.

16. Green Belts contain a large number of substantial and attractive agricultural buildings which, with normal repair and maintenance, can be expected to last for many years. When these are no longer needed for farming, the planning authority will need to consider whether they might be appropriately re-used for other purposes which help to diversify the rural economy. Redundant agricultural buildings can provide suitable accommodation for small firms or tourist activities or can be used as individual residences. The re-use of redundant buildings should not be refused unless there are specific and convincing reasons which cannot be overcome by attaching conditions to the planning permission.

17. In the next few years many older hospitals located in Green Belts are likely to become redundant. In planning for the future of these buildings and their sites the aim should be to use them for purposes compatible with the Green Belt, which can include institutional uses. The size, layout and form of the buildings may, however, make them unsuitable for such purposes. In such cases it will be necessary to consider whether very special circumstances exist that would warrant the change of use of the buildings or the construction of new buildings.

18. In some cases it may be possible to convert the existing buildings for housing or other uses, perhaps with some demolition of ancillary buildings. But if that is not a practical solution then the future of the buildings and the site, and the possibility of redevelopment, will need to be carefully considered. Putting the sites to beneficial use will be preferable to allowing the buildings to remain empty and the site to become derelict. Guidelines to assist local planning authorities in preparing policies for the sites and in dealing with planning applications follow:

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#### Guidelines for the future use of redundant hospital sites in Green Belts

---

(a) Re-use of the existing buildings for purposes within the accepted Green Belt categories is the preferred option, especially where the buildings are of architectural and historical importance. There may in particular be scope for re-use by institutions.

(b) However, if there is little or no prospect of viable re-use within those categories, then other uses are preferable to allowing the buildings to remain empty or grossly under-occupied. The aim should be to achieve redevelopment for other suitable uses by conversion of the existing buildings.

(c) If the existing buildings, or part of them, are unsuitable for conversion, then redevelopment should not normally occupy a larger area of the site nor exceed the height of the existing buildings. The location of the new buildings should be decided having regard to the main features of the landscape and the need to integrate the new development with its surroundings (eg it may be more appropriate to site new development closer to existing development).

(d) The amenity value of the site should be retained or enhanced where practical by preserving mature trees and keeping or laying out landscaped areas, and if possible opening them to public access with adequate provision for their maintenance.

(e) Redevelopment should not normally involve additional expenditure by the public sector on the provision of infrastructure (eg on roads and sewerage) nor should it overload local facilities such as schools and health care facilities.

(f) Local planning authorities should where appropriate include policies on these lines in their development plans.

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#### Note

This PPG note draws principally on DoE circulars 14/84 and 12/87 and a Parliamentary statement by the Secretary of State for the Environment on 30 April 1986 (*Hansard*, column 414).

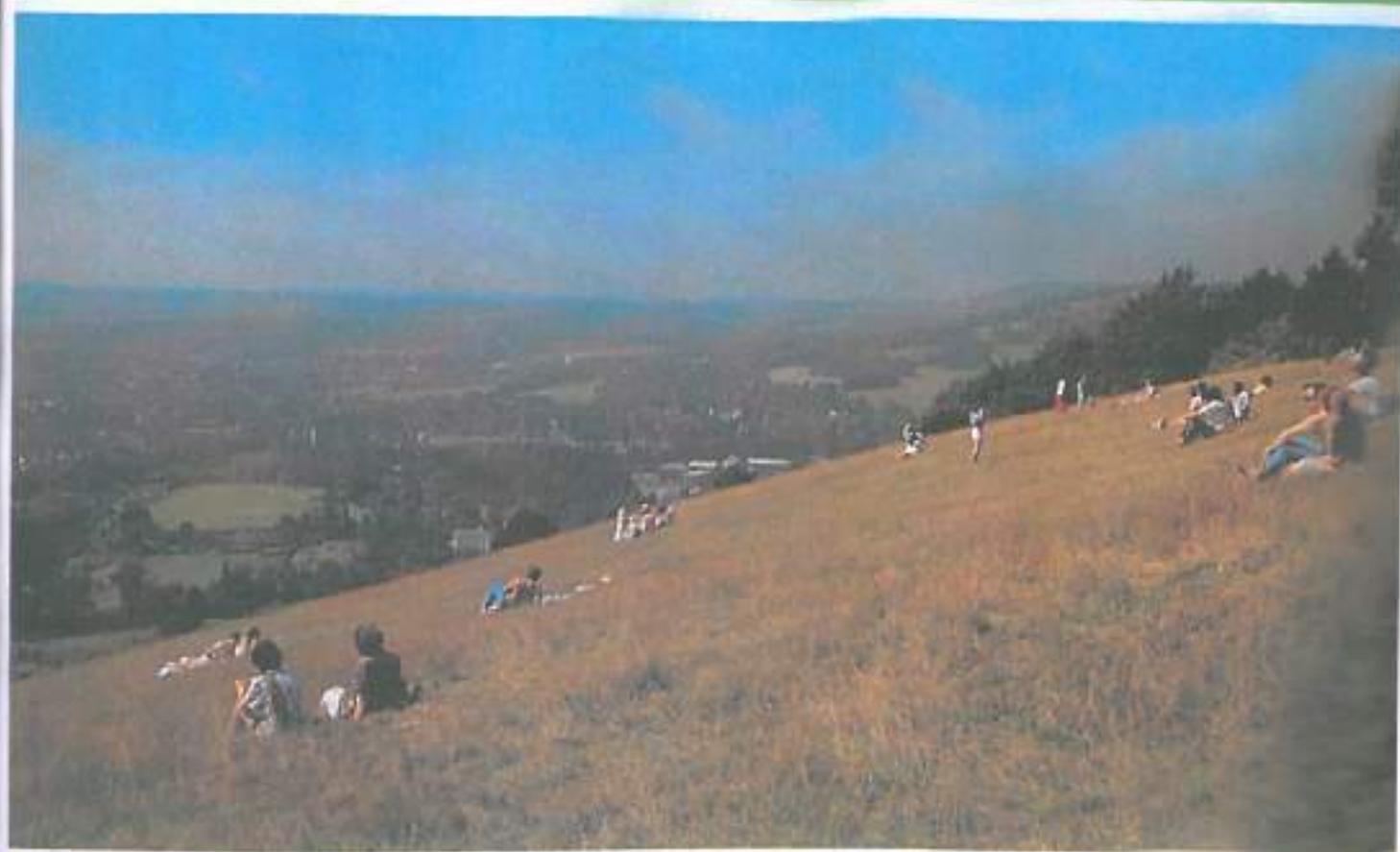
# ANNEXE I iv

DoE BOOKLET - THE GREEN BELTS

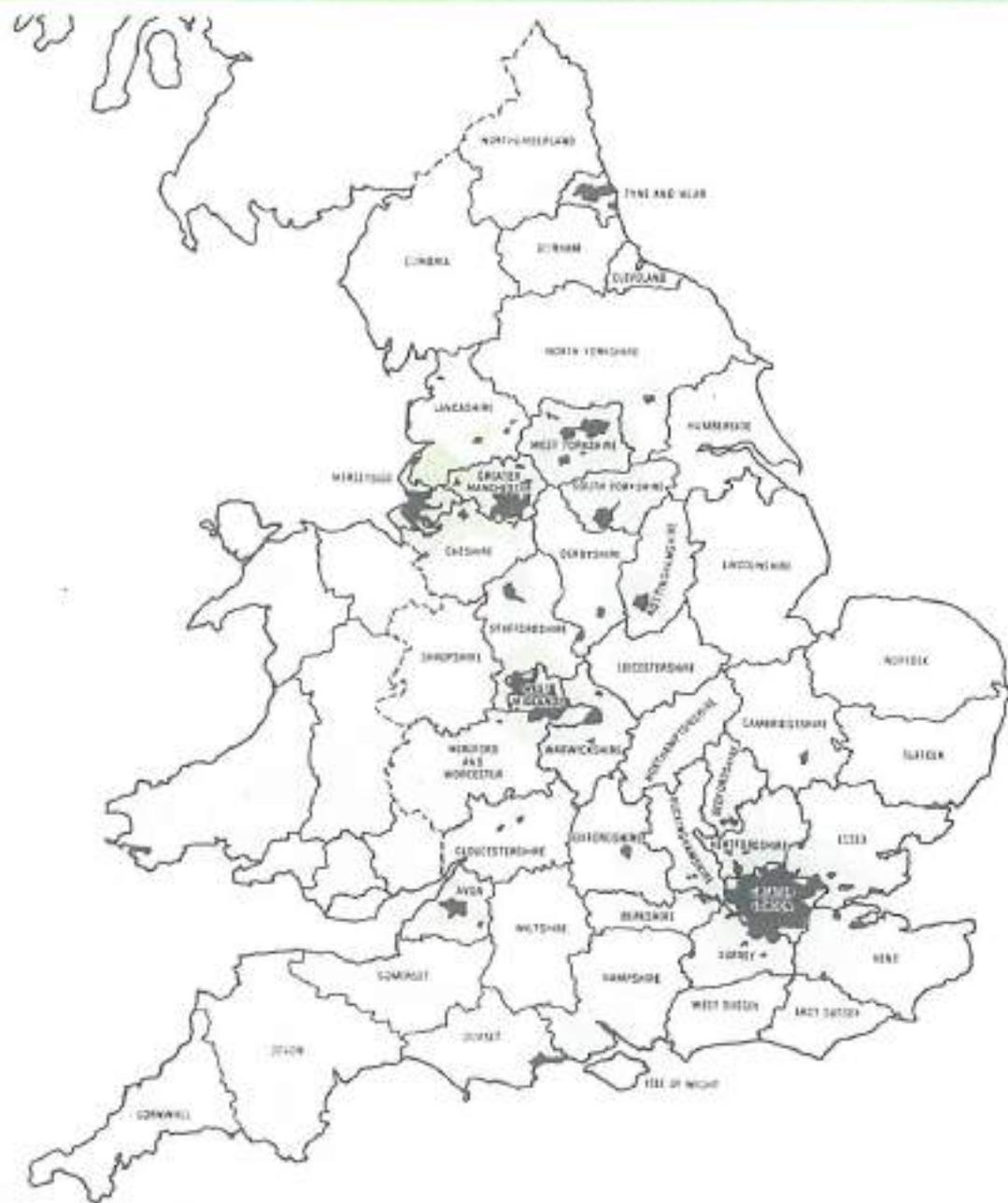
1988

DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT

# THE GREEN BELTS



HER MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE



**Approved Green Belts**

	Acres (approx)		
Greater Manchester Central/Lancs.		750,000	Oxford
Merseyside, Wirral		125,000	London
Stoke-on-Trent		200,000	Avon
Nottingham, Derby		2,000	SW Hampshire/SE Dorset
Burton - Seadrift/Coast		650,000	
West Midlands		26,554	
Cambridge		30,000	
Gloucester, Cheltenham			
Other			
<b>Total</b>			<b>6,400,000</b>

Frontispiece: *Approved Green Belts - based on Structure Plan key diagrams, September 1987*

## Acknowledgements

*Maps* The frontispiece map of approved Green Belts is taken from Planning Policy Guidance Note 2 (HMSO, 1988).

Figure 1 is derived from the Second Report of the Greater London Regional Planning Committee 1933 and the Greater London Plan 1944.

Figures 15 and 16 and the map of London's Green Belt at the back of the booklet have been produced for this booklet by the Cartographic Services Division of the Department of the Environment.

*Photographs* Many of the photographs in this booklet of sites in the Green Belt have been taken from the same view points used for photographs in the original 1962 edition; some new photographs have been added.

Figures 2 and 4 are reproduced by courtesy of St Albans Sand and Gravel, and Figure 5 by courtesy of Mr G Dyer.

Figure 17 – Simon Crouch

Figure 22 – Skyscan

Figure 23 – Martin Page Photography

All other photographs, including the photograph on the front cover, were taken specially for this booklet by Mr Charlie Waite of Landscape Only.

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*Front cover photo:* Box Hill, Surrey.

*Map inside back cover:* London's Green Belt.

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## Foreword by the Secretary of State for the Environment The Rt Hon Nicholas Ridley MP

This booklet was first published in 1962. I have decided to publish a new edition of it, not because our Green Belt policy has changed but because it demonstrates the continuity of that policy and our strong commitment to the Green Belts. I hope it will also remind people that Green Belts are something special. They serve specific purposes and they need to be carefully defined and firmly maintained.

The Green Belt idea had its origin long before the last war but it was not until the Green Belt (London and Home Counties) Act of 1938 that it was embodied in legislation. 1988 marks the 50th anniversary of that Act.

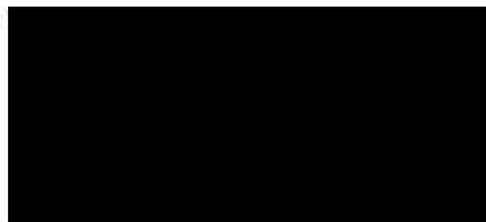
In preparing this new edition we found that very little in the text of the original version needed to be revised. After 25 years we have had to bring the factual and historical parts up to date, and the most important feature is that since 1979 we have more than doubled the total area of approved Green Belts. They now cover some 4,500,000 acres, and the London Green Belt has been increased to 1,200,000 acres. This booklet, like its predecessor, is mainly concerned with the London Green Belt but it also deals briefly with the Green Belts that have now been established in other parts of the country.

The basic Green Belt policy and its original purposes have not changed. But in the 1962 booklet there was a lot of emphasis on 'decentralisation' out of London and the other conurbations to New Towns, some of them within the Green Belts. We now put much more emphasis on the *regeneration* of the older urban areas and on the *re-use* of urban land. The purposes of the Green Belts were defined in 1954 as 'to check the further growth of a large built-up area; to prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another; or to preserve the special character of a town'. In 1984 we added a fourth policy objective - 'assisting in urban regeneration'. Our Green Belt policy is now matched with our policies for the renewal and improvement of the inner cities.

Our Green Belt policy also has to be linked with positive policies providing for houses and jobs in areas outside the Green Belts. All development needs cannot be met within the existing built-up areas, and the Green Belt concept would be far less effective if it were applied everywhere that is not already developed. Outside the Green Belts we have policies for preserving the open countryside, National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and other statutorily protected areas. But good planning has to provide for development too, and in ways that do least harm to the local environment.

The broad extent of the approved Green Belts has now been established in the county structure plans. But those plans show the Green Belts in very broad brush terms. The detailed boundaries have to be defined in local plans, which the local planning authorities are responsible for preparing and which are subject to formal procedures for public consultation and adoption. So it is disappointing to find that more than 30 years after local authorities were first invited to define Green Belts in development plans, large areas are still without a local plan and the precise boundaries have been left undefined. This provides no guidance to builders as to where development will and will not be allowed, and no assurance to local people who are left in similar uncertainty. I am issuing new advice to local planning authorities saying that I want to see full coverage of local plans, particularly in those areas where there are strong pressures for development and especially where the Green Belt boundaries have still not been clearly defined.

I hope that this booklet will demonstrate the success of the Green Belt policy and the pleasure that these wide open spaces around our great cities afford to millions of people. We must ensure that the Green Belts remain firmly in place for future generations.



## 5 Defining and Safeguarding a Green Belt

*This Section, about incorporating Green Belts into development plans, has been brought up to date in the light of changes in the statutory provisions on development plans.*

*Structure Plans* At the time when the original edition of this booklet was published in 1962, very few Green Belts, except for the London Green Belt, had been formally incorporated into the statutory development plans. The booklet gave advice on the preparation of initial 'sketch plans', which had to be submitted to the Minister of Housing and Local Government for approval, and the subsequent stages of incorporating them into development plans. Now all the Green Belts have been included in approved County structure plans. But structure plans show the Green Belts only in 'broad brush' terms. The detailed boundaries of Green Belts are defined in local plans prepared by the District planning authorities, or in some cases in Green Belt subject plans prepared by the Counties. In some areas, however, detailed Green Belt boundaries have not yet been defined in formally adopted local plans or subject plans. In some cases it is possible to trace the Green Belt boundary in old-style development plans prepared prior to the introduction of structure and local plans, but these are often out of date.

*Local Plans* The Secretary of State is urging on local planning authorities the importance of well prepared and up-to-date local plans as the basis for development control, particularly in areas that are under persistent pressure for new development, and especially in relation to the Green Belts where detailed boundaries have not yet been defined.

Now that the Green Belts have been established in approved structure plans, it is essential that the detailed boundaries should be clearly defined in local plans, so that it is clear which areas are covered by the special policies that apply to Green Belts and which are not. The long term protection that distinguishes the Green Belts must be maintained firmly and consistently, and both the Green Belt concept and that protection would be weakened unless they are firmly built into the statutory development plan.

Further advice on the definition of Green Belt boundaries is given in Planning Policy Guidance Note No. 2. In particular it gives the following advice:

Once the general extent of a Green Belt has been approved it should be altered only in exceptional circumstances. If such an alteration is proposed the Secretary of State will wish to be satisfied that the authority has considered opportunities for development within the urban areas contained by and beyond the Green Belt. Similarly, detailed Green Belt boundaries defined in adopted local plans or earlier approved development plans should be altered only exceptionally. Detailed boundaries should not be amended or development allowed merely because the land has become derelict. On the outer edge of a Green Belt, readily recognisable features, such as roads, streams or belts of trees, should be used to define the boundaries.

Where detailed Green Belt boundaries have not yet been defined, local planning authorities are urged to complete this task. It is necessary to establish boundaries that will endure and they should be carefully drawn so as not to include land which it is unnecessary to keep permanently open. Otherwise there is a risk that encroachment on the Green Belt will have to be allowed in order to accommodate future development.

*Keeping a Green Belt open* When a Green Belt has been incorporated in the development plan of a local planning authority, it is their duty to carry out the policy prescribed in the plan. Development plans are firm in general principle but flexible in detail. They are reviewed and amended as and when necessary, usually every five to ten years. Planning authorities are bound to have regard to their development plans when they make a decision on an application for permission to build. If in so doing they intend to depart from the plan to a substantial extent, they must first notify the Secretary of State, who has the power to intervene if he thinks fit. These are necessary measures to preserve flexibility in detail and to provide for public debate on any substantial amendment to a development plan. They do not imply any wavering on the principle of maintaining a Green Belt as open country, a principle which has been firmly upheld by local planning authorities and successive Secretaries of State.

## 6 London's Green Belt

*This Section has been rewritten to take account of the large extensions made to London's approved Green Belt since 1962.*

*Its establishment* London's Green Belt was the first to be established, and is the largest, so it merits a full description. The creation of a Green Belt around the metropolis had been urged for many years, and had been given form in the Greater London Plan of 1944. That plan and its successors proposed not only the Green Belt but also the building of new towns and the expansion of existing towns in the surrounding counties, so as to ease the pressure for the outward expansion of London. It is these things, together with the firm planning policies which back the Green Belt designation in development plans, which have made London's Green Belt a reality. No physical changes nor public acquisition of the land are necessarily implied.

The approval in 1959 of the last of the development plans of the Home Counties made it possible to speak of London's Green Belt as an established fact and no longer as an elusive ideal. Since then, as the pressures of urban expansion and the threat of the coalescence of towns and villages have spread beyond the original Green Belt, so the area of the Green Belt has been extended. Today the approved Green Belt covers about 1,200,000 acres of the country around Greater London, an area more than twice as big as that approved in 1959. The extent of the

To sum up, London's Green Belt is an irregular and broken ring of open country around the great city, the use of which contributes in one form or another to the well-being of Londoners. It is as necessary today, but for different reasons, as in the days when London was dependent on the agriculture of the surrounding countryside. Increased leisure, higher standards of living, the greater strain of urban life and a growing desire for knowledge and understanding of the arts and sciences combine to invite Londoners to appreciate more and more the value of their Green Belt.

## 7 Provincial Green Belts

*This Section has been revised to take account of the wide extensions to approved Green Belt since 1962.*

When the 1962 booklet was published proposals for several of the provincial Green Belts were still in their formative stages. Since then, they have all been incorporated in approved structure plans and are shown diagrammatically on the map at the front of this booklet. These Green Belts now extend to a wide range of beautiful and diverse landscapes throughout England, while also serving the objectives of urban containment and regeneration.

*Tyneside* The boundaries of the Green Belt in Tyneside were extended in the Tyne and Wear Green Belt Local Plan, adopted in 1985. With the exception of a gap to its north east the Tyneside conurbation is surrounded by Green Belt. In merging with the substantial area of Green Belt in Northumberland, situated to the west and north of Newcastle (Fig. 17), a continuous Green Belt is formed embracing attractive countryside on both banks of the Tyne as far up as Hexham. To the south the Green Belt prevents the Tyneside conurbation from merging with that of Wearside.

*York* A Green Belt around York has been approved in principle for many years and a belt whose outer edge is about 6 miles from York City centre was formally approved in 1980 as part of the North Yorkshire County Structure Plan. Its main purpose is to safeguard the special character of the historic city, which might be endangered by unrestricted expansion. The bulk of the land in the Green Belt is good and pleasant farmland, providing links with open land running into the built-up area of the city.

*West Yorkshire Conurbation* This Green Belt was reviewed and approved in 1980 in the County Structure Plans for West and North Yorkshire. The Green Belt provides wedges of open land between the urban areas, a continuous band of generally open land within the core of the conurbation and a girdle to the conurbation as a whole. Its main purposes are to prevent uncontrolled growth of the urban areas and the coalescence of many separate settlements, to preserve the recreational and amenity value of areas of open land which extend from the

countryside into the urban area and to preserve easy access to open country and outdoor recreation in pleasant surroundings. The Green Belt has contributed to the maintenance of the unusually open, and often attractive, character of this conurbation. Towards the outer edges of the belt much of the countryside is particularly scenic, especially in the hills and valleys to the west and north.

*South Yorkshire Conurbation* The broad extent of this Green Belt was reviewed and approved in 1979 in the South Yorkshire County Structure Plan. It is intended to prevent uncontrolled growth of the major urban areas of Sheffield, Rotherham, Doncaster and Barnsley, and the coalescence of the many smaller settlements which lie between them in a broad band of countryside stretching from the Peak District National Park in the west to Doncaster in the east. Sheffield was one of the first cities to consider the provision of a Green Belt in 1938 and, in 1983, it was the first District in the Yorkshire and Humberside Region to adopt a formal Green Belt subject plan. While the main purpose of this Green Belt is to prevent the merging of settlements, it has the advantage of protecting attractive countryside, particularly on the edge of the Pennines, while helping to preserve easy access to open country and outdoor recreation in pleasant surroundings.

*Merseyside - Greater Manchester* The Merseyside, Greater Manchester, Central Lancashire and North Cheshire Green Belts combine to form a belt around and between the two north west conurbations. Their purpose is to halt the outward spread and coalescence of the built-up areas and to preserve the identity and character of the many towns and settlements which make up the conurbations (Fig. 18). The Green Belts extend in a broad band, from the Ribble Valley in the

*Fig. 17 Near  
Bywell,  
Northumberland -  
looking south over the  
valley of the River  
Tyne in the Tyneside  
Green Belt*



*Fig. 18 A picnic in the Green Belt at Pickmere, north Cheshire*

*Fig. 19 The Macclesfield Canal, Cheshire*



north to Chester in the south, and from the Lancashire coast in the west to the foothills of the Pennines in the east. An arm of the Central Lancashire Green Belt continues up the Calder Valley to encompass the towns of north east Lancashire. In each case the Green Belts help to reinforce policies for urban regeneration.

The character of the landscape varies greatly: from the flat, top quality farmland of south west Lancashire to the lush hills and valleys adjoining the Peak District National Park in north east Cheshire (Fig. 19). It includes the pleasant agricultural scenery of part of the Cheshire Plain, where there are several large areas of parkland and golf courses, and further west takes in magnificent views of the Dee Estuary and the Welsh Hills beyond. In north east Lancashire, the Green Belt includes land on the edge of industrial towns framed by views of Pendle Hill (part of the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) and of the South Pennine moors.

Much of the Green Belt within the conurbations is fragmented and contains derelict areas and the varied mixture of uses often found on the fringes of large towns. A feature of the Greater Manchester Green Belt is the inclusion of narrow fingers along several river valleys which bring countryside into the heart of built-up areas of the conurbation. Although some parts of these valleys have been used for industrial and other development in the past, large areas remain relatively unspoiled and the local authorities are working together to restore them and to exploit their potential for walking, riding and other informal recreational pursuits.

*Lancashire Coast* Small remaining areas of open land have been designated as Green Belt along the north Lancashire coast to prevent the merging of Blackpool,

Cleveleys, Lytham St Annes and other coastal towns, and to arrest the northward spread of Morecambe and Lancaster.

*West Midlands:* The Green Belt has restrained the outward growth of the main built-up areas of Birmingham, Coventry and the Black Country; safeguarded surrounding countryside, some parts of which eg. the Lickey Hills and Cannock Chase are of high landscape value and popular places of outdoor recreation; maintained the separate character of individual towns like Stafford, Tamworth, Nuneaton, Redditch and Bromsgrove; preserved the special character of cities and towns like Lichfield, Warwick, Bridgnorth and Stratford upon Avon; and assisted in the regeneration of the older urban areas inside the conurbation. Green Belt protection has also been given to two strategic areas of open land inside the conurbation, one, the Sandwell Valley in the Black Country, the other Sutton Park in Birmingham because of the vital contribution these open areas make to the quality of the urban environment.

*Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire:* The four Green Belts in Derbyshire were reviewed and approved in 1980 in the County Structure Plan. The South Derbyshire Green Belt prevents the coalescence of Burton on Trent and Swadlincote. Similarly the South East Derbyshire Green Belt prevents the coalescence of Derby and Nottingham and preserves the identity of Duffield, Belper, the Erewash Valley Towns and villages to the south and east of Derby. In the north of the County, the Green Belt for North East Derbyshire protects the open countryside between Sheffield and the settlements in the north east of the County, including Chesterfield (Fig. 20), while the North West Derbyshire Green Belt helps to maintain the separate identity of the north west Derbyshire towns and protects the

*Fig. 20 Looking east towards Chesterfield over the Green Belt in north east Derbyshire from the Peak District National Park*



very attractive open country north of Whaley Bridge between the borders of the Peak District National Park and Greater Manchester.

The County Structure Plan approved in 1980 set out the broad extent of the Nottinghamshire Green Belt. Much of the Green Belt is pleasant countryside and average to good farmland. Its main purpose is to prevent the uncontrolled growth of Nottingham in the east and south, and in the west towards Derby. The Green Belt also protects the separate identity of towns within the Erewash Valley and other main towns to the north of Nottingham, including Hucknall, Mansfield and Ashfield.

*Stoke-on-Trent* The Green Belt around Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle-under-Lyme has limited the spread of the urban area; prevented coalescence with nearby towns like Congleton, Leek, Cheddle and Stone; and stimulated the regeneration of older industrial areas inside the Potteries conurbation. Much of this Green Belt is farmland and is attractive scenery, the north-eastern sector being of particular landscape value, similar in character to the neighbouring Peak District National Park.

*Gloucester and Cheltenham* The purposes of this Green Belt are to protect the open character of the land between these two towns and to prevent them from merging. In 1981 the Gloucestershire Structure Plan extended the Green Belt north of Cheltenham to further protect the character of the town. The land in the Green Belt is almost all pleasant agricultural land at the foot of the Cotswold Hills, which are themselves designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

*Fig. 21 The Oxford Green Belt from Boars Hill*



*Fig. 22 Beaulieu and the Beaulieu River in the South West Hampshire Green Belt*



*Bristol and Bath*, also known as the Avon Green Belt and the Western Wiltshire Green Belt. All the main reasons for the establishment of a Green Belt apply in this case: to restrict the outward expansion of Bristol, to separate Bristol from Bath and to protect the special character of Bath. The landscape in the southern part of the Green Belt is very fine and the escarpment north of Bristol overlooking the river Severn is also attractive. The remainder is mainly pleasant farmland. Some extensions and minor boundary adjustments to the Green Belt were made when the Avon Structure Plan was approved in 1985, including the addition of attractive coastline between Clevedon and Portishcad.

*Oxford* Oxford has become well known as a city with a dual personality. It is famous both as a university town and as a prosperous centre. The Green Belt seeks to prevent it from growing any bigger and to protect its character and setting. The landscape is not outstandingly attractive but it is intimate in scale and gentle in character. Most of it is average to good land used for mixed farming (Fig. 21).

*Cambridge* Cambridge also experiences the pressures of being both a university and a booming modern industrial town. There is a settled policy to limit its size, together with that of the surrounding villages. The Green Belt is one of the tools used to implement that policy and so help to preserve the city's character. The land is used for arable farming and is mainly flat but some higher ground to the west and the Gog Magog Hills to the south are also included.

*South West Hampshire* An area of Green Belt lies to the south west of the county. It is attractive country which includes the New Forest, the north shore of the Solent lying to the west of Southampton Water and the Beaulieu River (Fig. 22).

*South East Dorset* This Green Belt was established when the South East Dorset Structure Plan was approved in 1980. Its purposes are to contain the outward spread of the large built-up area of Poole, Bournemouth and Christchurch and to keep the separate identity of settlements. The Green Belt includes attractive river valleys, heathland and many wooded areas which are of recreational and nature conservation interest.

## 8 The Implications of a Green Belt

*This Section has been revised, using the same headings, to take account of developments in other planning policies and procedures since 1962. The earlier passage on Decentralisation has been replaced by a new passage on Urban Regeneration.*

*The pressure on Green Belts* There is a strong demand for more space for urban living. One of the many reasons is that despite pre-war forecasts of an eventual decline, the population of the country is still increasing. The number of separate households is growing even faster. There is plenty of work and greater prosperity, so that more people can afford separate and better homes. More land is required for new schools, hospitals and other public purposes, as well as for new roads and car parks to cope with the increasing traffic. If this need for more urban land encounters the restrictions implicit in a Green Belt, there are bound to be sharp increases in the value of building land and pressure to encroach on the Green Belts. Planning authorities and successive Ministers alike have resisted this pressure, have from time to time reiterated their intention to maintain the Green Belts and have supported their words by day to day decisions. They have done so while fully realising that land must be provided elsewhere to meet those needs which are not to be allowed in the Green Belt.

*The allocation of building land* The development plans prepared by local planning authorities (county councils and district councils) set out their policies for the development and other use of land in their areas. Pressure to build on land that is not allocated for development has mounted and land values have increased sharply wherever permission to build could be got. This has led to many requests for more land to be made available, often at the expense of a Green Belt.

*Reviews of development plans* Most county structure plans are now being reviewed. Such a review provides an opportunity to allocate more land for building if there is not enough already. In 1960 the Minister thought it advisable to issue a circular to local planning authorities on the subject. He said that he was anxious to see more land provided for development (where that did not conflict with important planning objectives) and to encourage fuller use of land within towns. Where a town was encircled by a Green Belt, adequate land should be selected beyond it, both for house building and for factories and offices. That policy guidance has been repeated on many occasions since 1960 and is just as relevant today.

# ANNEXE I v

DoE RESEARCH PAPER  
THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GREEN BELTS

1993

Department of the Environment

Planning Research Programme

## The Effectiveness of Green Belts

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## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GREEN BELTS

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The aim of the research was to review the effectiveness of Green Belt policy and investigate how this might be improved. The study assessed systematically:

- i) the effectiveness of Green Belts in relation to their existing purposes;
- ii) the implications of possible new purposes;
- iii) the roles of Green Belts in the management of sub-regional change;
- iv) the permanence of Green Belts, and the extent of provision for long term needs;
- v) their implications for transport and CO2 emissions;
- vi) urban fringe issues, including Community Forests, golf courses, agriculture, wildlife and other land use pressures and changes; and
- vii) the impact of development control policy within Green Belts, including the re-use of redundant buildings, the interpretation of 'institutions in extensive grounds', and of appropriate rural uses and the treatment of existing inappropriate uses.

This summary gives the key findings, with references to where they are discussed in the text in square brackets. Recommendations are listed numerically at the end of each section of this summary.

The study covered Green Belt policy in England and Scotland. Twenty eight local authority policy case studies were complemented by detailed analysis of development control data and information on appeals. Interviews were conducted with a wide range of development and conservation interests, and two invitation seminars were held to obtain further expert views and opinion.

#### Existing Purposes of Green Belts

1. *The first two purposes of Green Belts, checking unrestricted sprawl, and preventing towns from merging, are being achieved.*

We found no dissenters to the view that Green Belts are successfully being used to check unrestricted sprawl and prevent towns from merging. Alterations to boundaries in development plans had affected less than 0.3 per cent of Green Belts in the areas studied over the last eight years [2.10-2.14]. Most planning approvals are for small-scale changes which do not significantly affect the open rural appearance of Green Belts [2.15-2.20]. The appeal system strongly upholds Green Belt policy [2.21; 3.16].

2. *The third purpose, safeguarding the surrounding countryside from encroachment, has significantly overlapped the first two purposes.*

Green Belts have safeguarded the countryside from further encroachment. This purpose has however overlapped the first two purposes, not adding to the already very firm restraint on development offered by Green Belts. Safeguarding the surrounding countryside from encroachment was not a specific purpose for including land in Green Belt until 1988. Its inclusion appears not, in practice, to have added to the already very firm restraint offered by Green Belts in the 1955-88 period. In its present form this purpose does not provide a clear criterion for decision-makers. Current practice suggests this purpose is seen as complementing countryside policies by assisting in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment [2.23-2.25].

3. *The relationship between Green Belt restraint and increasing levels of economic activity, and their impacts on the cores of cities of special historic character, are unclear.*

Green Belt boundaries around historic towns are particularly tight, and future development requirements have been assessed conservatively. Green Belts have been used with little dispute to protect the settings of, and define the approaches to, such towns. These purposes should be stressed in guidance. It is less clear how far peripheral restraint is necessarily linked to the protection of their historic centres. Department comments suggest such towns may have limits to their growth. These issues should be further investigated by a comparative study of historic towns [2.26-2.34].

4. *The role of Green Belts in urban regeneration has been to focus development interest on sites in urban areas.*

For local authorities in urban regeneration areas Green Belt restraint has acted to encourage development within urban boundaries. At the same time, for some local authorities a major catalyst for urban regeneration is seen to be the freeing of prime industrial sites from the Green Belt. Local authorities in regeneration areas are concerned to have a portfolio of urban and greenfield sites readily available for new economic activity. In some areas larger-scale mixed-use developments have been proposed as parts of city-wide urban regeneration strategies. Denying a range of peripheral site development options will not secure the regeneration of under-used urban sites on its own. Policies to encourage the re-use of urban land will be of greater importance. There is a need for more detailed work on the relationship between Green Belt restraint and urban regeneration [2.35-2.43].

5. *Most decisions on Green Belt boundaries in plans involve making assumptions about urban intensification.*

Throughout the case study areas planners, and the Department's Regional Offices, are making decisions about the balance between development by infill within urban areas, and peripheral expansion of various kinds. However, little is known on a systematic basis about land use changes in the suburbs and their effects on movement, open space, pollution and other quality of life indicators. In the future local authorities, particularly in the South, are likely to be presenting arguments on 'overheating' problems as a reason for altering Green Belts. There may be areas of green space in towns and cities which, if developed, would adversely affect living conditions for more people than if equivalent land of lower amenity and ecological quality in Green Belts was developed [2.22].

6. *The time taken to approve Green Belt boundaries in local plans is too long.*

In a number of counties the Structure Plan has been altered or replaced before local plan boundaries based on the original plan have been agreed. This may be due to unresolved problems over the location of development following approval of the broad totals in the Structure Plan. The Department has advised Authorities who do not have agreed boundaries in local plans that they risk greater amounts of development in their areas. Slow progress also creates uncertainty, particularly at appeal, where it may be difficult to assess the status of land [2.11].

*It is recommended that:*

- R.1 *Green Belts should be seen as a policy instrument for shaping patterns of urban development at sub-regional and regional scales. They help to ensure development occurs in locations decided upon in development plans, and they assist in protecting the countryside. Green Belt policies should also, by creating contained forms of new development, assist in moving towards more sustainable patterns of urban growth [2.23-2.25; 6.14-6.19].*
- R.2 *The purposes for including specific areas of land in a Green Belt should be:*
- *to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;*
  - *to prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another [2.10-2.22];*
  - *to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment [2.23-2.25];*

- to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns [2.26-2.34]; and
  - to assist in urban regeneration [2.35-2.43].
- R.3 Sites for large-scale employment in areas where urban regeneration is a priority should not be released from the green belt except as part of the regional guidance-development plan process [2.35-2.43].
- R.4 The relationship between Green Belt restraint and increasing levels of economic activity, and the special character of historic cities should be investigated by a comparison of land use, traffic and other policies within a number of historic cities and their surrounding daily journey to work areas [2.29-2.34].
- R.5 The need for up-to-date approved Green Belt boundaries, so as to avoid ambiguity and allow the proper consideration of future development options, should continue to be stressed [2.11].

#### Development Control

7. *The use of inset and washed over village policies varies across the country.*

In some of the northern case study areas insets can exclude clusters of 50 dwellings from Green Belt controls. In the Home Counties settlements of 500 dwellings are washed over. Circular 50/57 suggests that washed over villages should be divided into those where infill is allowed (their names being listed in the development plan) and those where it is not. The tendency is to allow infill in all of them. The major distinction emerging locally however is that within inset settlements, because they are not in Green Belt, there is leeway for new and expanding employment concerns to develop. The currency of paragraphs 6 and 7 of Circular 50/57 should be made clear, and reference could be made to the differences in treatment of employment uses implied where settlements are excluded from the Green Belt [3.2-3.7].

8. *Most local authorities have elaborated development control policies in greater detail than is specified in PPG 2.*

The scan of existing and new local plans suggested on average nine Green Belt development control policies were included. The development control study showed that three quarters of all applications were housing-related, focusing particularly on small-scale extensions [3.12-3.15]. The size and bulk of extensions, and the criteria for replacement dwellings, were also important.

The policies most frequently included in plans related to dwelling extensions and alterations, replacement dwellings and leisure uses [3.17-3.20].

9. *There is confusion over policies on the re-use of buildings in Green Belts, linked to the different approaches in PPG 2 and PPG 7.*

This issue caused more comment than any other. PPG 2 states that *redundant* agricultural buildings may be suitable for conversion for small firms, tourist activities or individual residences. The Pehrsson ruling removes the need for the buildings to be, or have been, agricultural. Guidance in PPG 7 states that a wider range of uses are now acceptable in the countryside, and removes the redundancy criterion. Thus the main difference between Green Belt and the countryside beyond is now the redundancy test. Following consideration of the various options we consider policy in Green Belts should be brought into line with that in the wider countryside. We do not believe that diversification by farmers should be made more difficult in Green Belt. Accordingly we do not consider the continued use of the redundancy test is appropriate. Where agricultural buildings are being re-used for non-agricultural purposes we recommend that permitted development rights for future agricultural buildings on the holding should be removed [3.28-3.38].

10. *The category of institutions in extensive grounds is considered to be outdated, inappropriate to Green Belt, and subject to problems of definition.*

Wide-ranging views demonstrated difficulties with the concept. Allowing a new institution in Green Belt was seen as inappropriate as, in its effects, it could be little different to a B1 business use. There were also difficulties in defining an institution, for example how far it should be for a private as opposed to a public purpose. Much difficulty surrounded the issue of what comprise extensive grounds. Costly legal proceedings have not served to clarify the concept. We propose that institutions should no longer be regarded as an appropriate Green Belt use. The institutional re-use of existing buildings would fall within the terms of current building re-use policy generally [3.39-3.44].

11. *Special attention should be given to existing employment sites in Green Belts.*

In all Green Belts there are employment sites located in the open countryside or washed over settlements. Most local authorities wish to protect such sources of employment, and allow for reasonable expansion requirements. Employment uses are however regarded as inappropriate in the Green Belt. Any approvals must be justified by very special circumstances. Where local authorities have sought to include policies in district-wide local plans these have been rejected by the Department. A local authority wishing to allow for employment changes should consider the following; first, specification of the

material considerations to be applied to any development approved in the Green Belt second, providing an employment inset; or third, ensuring that any redevelopment of this sort should improve the visual amenities of the Green Belt, reduce traffic and make a positive contribution to the management of Green Belt land. Similar provisions occur in guidance in Scotland relating to Green Belt [3.46-3.49].

12. *The attitude to proposals for Park and Ride car parks should be clarified.*

There was a strong feeling that Green Belt guidance should take a view on the increasing number of Park and Ride proposals coming forward. There are different views. First, Park and Ride schemes could be regarded as clearly acceptable in Green Belt, as an ancillary to the normal road system, with the additional virtue of encouraging people to transfer from cars to public transport. Alternatively they could be seen as inappropriate due to their impact on openness, very special circumstances being required to be established. A third view, which was recommended as the preferred basic approach, was to identify such sites during local plan preparation, putting them forward as proposals in the plan [3.59-3.61].

13. *A number of authorities have sought to define and list the very special circumstances in which they would depart from Green Belt policy in plans.*

A policy clearly listing all appropriate Green Belt uses would be a benefit to decision-makers. PPG 2 advises against local authorities preparing policies for exceptional circumstances as these create a new round of difficulties in interpretation, and can raise false expectations among applicants. Although the Department itself has written guidance on very special circumstances for low cost housing and hospital sites this runs similar risks. Many local authorities, for example, dislike the advice on low cost housing because they consider it creates new ambiguities and room for dispute [3.9-3.11; 3.69].

*It is recommended that:*

- R.6 *The basic distinction between inset and washed over settlements in Green Belts, referred to in Circular 50/57, should be retained [3.2-3.7].*
- R.7 *Where infill is to be allowed in small washed over settlements 'infill boundaries' should be defined in plans. Such infill would therefore constitute appropriate development within the Green Belt [3.2; 3.7].*
- R.8 *The difference of treatment of existing employment uses in washed over settlements and Green Belts insets should be made clear [3.7].*

- R.9 *Local authorities should normally be allowed to include specific policies on dwelling extensions and alterations, replacement dwellings, and outdoor sport and recreation (including golf courses, driving ranges and equestrian activities) in Green Belts in development plans [3.17-3.20; 3.68].*
- R.10 *The PPG 3 policy relating to the special circumstances in which Green Belt sites may be released for housing for local needs should be monitored in terms of the amount and type of sites involved and conditions [3.24].*
- R.11 *The redundancy test in respect of the re-use of existing buildings in Green Belts should be removed, but a policy should be introduced to make it normal for permitted development rights to be removed by condition in any approvals given where farm buildings are involved [3.28-3.38].*
- R.12 *The PPG 7 safeguards relating to the re-use of buildings in the countryside generally should be re-affirmed for Green Belts [3.28-3.38].*
- R.13 *The impact of approvals for the re-use of buildings under PPG 7 should be monitored in terms of how far they are compromising the openness and visual amenities of the Green Belt and the countryside beyond, and how far they are assisting the local economy [3.28-3.38].*
- R.14 *Farm diversification proposals should be encouraged within the parameters of R.11 and R.12 [3.33-3.38].*
- R.15 *Institutions standing in extensive grounds should be deleted as an appropriate land use in Green Belts. The institutional re-use of existing buildings would fall within recommendations R.11 and R.12. New institutional buildings would require to be justified in very special circumstances where a non-Green Belt site was unavailable [3.39-3.44].*
- R.16 *Development plan policies should state that where development is approved in the Green Belt, including alterations to the size and appearance of existing buildings, the scheme will contain provisions to improve the landscape, enhance visual amenity and support the achievement of open land objectives [3.46-3.48].*
- R.17 *Development plan policies should state that where proposals for the redevelopment of existing employment uses present the opportunity, development control should aim to reduce the visual impact, and off-site traffic flows, related to future use [3.46-3.48].*

- R.18 Where employment areas and major sites are of national or regional importance consideration should be given to creating Green Belt insets [3.45-3.48].
- R.19 Local authorities should identify sites for Park and Ride car parks in development plans, seeking alterations to Green Belt boundaries if necessary. Individual proposals in approved Green Belts would be treated as very special circumstances, applicants being required to show that no other suitable site outside the Green Belt was available [3.61].
- R.20 Utilities should only be allowed in the Green Belt if there is no alternative location outside the Green Belt [3.63].
- R.21 The phrase 'other uses appropriate to a rural area' in para 14 of PPG 2 should be replaced by the more appropriate phrase 'new buildings ancillary to open uses of land in the Green Belt' [3.64].
- R.22 Development plans should not refer to specific very special circumstances in which development would be contemplated in Green Belts [3.9-3.11; 3.69].

#### Urban Fringe and Open Land

14. *The functions performed by open land in Green Belts should be recognised in the guidance and should be listed as Green Belt objectives.*

We can expect to see a more multi-activity countryside near towns. The role of the Green Belt as a locale for outdoor sport and recreation is recognised and encouraged by local authorities. The Green Belt can also be a focus for environmental and greening strategies, aiming to restore damaged land, protect wildlife and attractive landscapes. Consistent support for agriculture, not least for its contribution to a healthy landscape, was also noted [4.22-4.27; 4.1-4.8].

15. *Problems of generating sufficient resources for the environmental improvement of damaged land in Green Belts have led to proposals for 'enabling' development.*

Green Belt policy reduces the scope for environmental improvement in conjunction with new development, except through the balancing process accompanying the establishment of very special circumstances at appeal. However suggestions that areas can exceptionally be defined in Green Belts where different 'enabling' policies should apply, would appear to confuse the Green Belt concept and reduce its effectiveness. Such land would better be excluded from Green Belts in development plans in the absence of sufficient non-private resources for their improvement [4.11-4.13].

16. *There is scope for using planning conditions to secure environmental objectives in Green Belts.*

Although development is severely limited in Green Belts, a wide range of land use changes are approved each year, as the development control scan illustrates. These can include proposals for the re-use of buildings for industrial and office purposes and a range of leisure-related schemes. In negotiations with applicants planners should address issues of enhancing the environment of the Green Belt as part of such schemes [4.20; 3.75].

17. *There is some scope for using planning obligations to secure environmental improvements in Green Belts.*

Where development affects a resource present on-site, authorities may negotiate equivalent off-site benefits. Where development is approved local authorities should seek to negotiate landscape and open land improvements. Acceptable development near to Green Belts may assist in funding Green Belt environmental improvements, but only if the need arises as a direct result of the proposed development [4.21].

*It is recommended that:*

*R.23 The following objectives of Green Belts should be listed in guidance:*

- to promote the use of land for outdoor sport and recreation [4.7; 4.23-4.25];*
- to retain and improve landscapes near to where people live [4.26];*
- to enhance and improve damaged and derelict land in the urban fringe, and secure the nature conservation interest [4.27-4.28].*

*R.24 Significant development or redevelopment of land which occurs in the Green Belt should demonstrate benefits for the environment and landscape of the Green Belt. Such provisions should, in particular, apply to new consents for minerals, the tipping of waste, and road and other infrastructure developments or improvements [4.8; 4.20-4.21].*

*R.25 Community Forests in Green Belts should continue to work within Green Belt policies [4.14-4.19].*

*R.26 Use of the principle of enabling development to fund environmental improvements should not be allowed in approved Green Belts [4.12-4.13].*

*R.27 Where development occurs on sites adjoining Green Belts, either in suburban areas or by infilling and rounding off within settlements inset in the Green Belt, developers could contribute by agreement to*

*environmental improvement or tree planting both on-site and on adjoining land. The need for such improvements would have to arise as a direct result of the proposed development [4.21].*

- R.28 The scale and types of environmental improvement which have been negotiated in association with planning permissions in the urban fringe and Green Belts should be further investigated [4.21].*

#### Permanence

- 18. Exceptional circumstances for the alteration of approved Green Belts in structure plans have most often been substantiated for employment-related development.*

Some of the exceptions agreed in structure plans were already agreed in Regional Guidance: others were argued more locally. Most refer to high amenity, well-located sites, intended for high technology or other 'leading edge' firms. The Department has challenged the number, size and location of such sites where local authorities have interpreted the guidance over-generously. It would appear counterproductive for local authorities to specify what 'exceptional circumstances' might be in policies in structure plans. Local authorities should, however, set out to demonstrate exceptional circumstances if they wish to alter boundaries in a structure plan, and not merely argue that the normal process of review can allocate new supplies of land. Changes to Green Belt boundaries should be considered in relation to structure plan alteration and replacement, and not first at district plan level. General policies which allow almost continuous small-scale review of boundaries should also not be allowed as these devalue the concept [5.5-5.10].

- 19. Structure plan policies allowing for the general small-scale alteration of Green Belt boundaries by districts, as part of the local plan process, are not acceptable.*

The argument advanced in favour of such policies is that there is a level of Green Belt boundary alteration which is not of structural importance. Whilst minor technical adjustments, to allow for appeal decisions and drafting errors are clearly acceptable, there is a risk, if such policies were accepted, that Green Belt policy would proceed entirely by continuous 'nibbling' at short-term policy reviews [5.8].

20. *Where exceptional circumstances have been demonstrated in altering a Green Belt boundary in a structure plan, it may be unnecessary to require districts to also prove exceptional circumstances for the release of land on a site by site basis.*

This argument surrounds what it is necessary to prove to secure the alteration of an agreed Green Belt boundary in a local plan. If the circumstance is a ruling on a district housing land total, which all parties at the EIP accept implies Green Belt changes, a general locational steer for the district in the structure plan may be appropriate. Also the district should only have to show that the sites chosen are better than other sites in the district (see para 9 of PPG 2) not that there are exceptional circumstances independent of those demonstrated in the structure plan. This situation may occur in future as boundaries in some district-wide plans require alteration [5.9].

21. *There is a need to set out the criteria to be satisfied for the establishment of new Green Belts, or major extensions to existing ones.*

Proposals for new Green Belts continue to be made. However Green Belts should be seen as a policy instrument to be used only exceptionally, when other development control policies have proved inadequate. They should fulfill Green Belt purposes. Authorities should assess how appropriate such a measure would be to the problems of the locality concerned, and how far circumstances had changed rendering an alteration to existing policy necessary. Clear evidence should be sought by the Department on these points [5.11-5.12].

22. *There is a strong case for making safeguarded land ('white land'), or its equivalent, a normal requirement in development plans.*

Only one half of the local authorities studied had white land or its equivalent in plans, although the number proposing to include white land in new district plans was higher. It is important in terms of sustainable development to have a long-term view on the direction of development in localities. This should also aid infrastructure provision and the negotiation of community benefits. A new emphasis on avoiding town cramming, put forward in advice in PPG 3, and a concern to protect urban greenspace, suggests development outside existing urban boundaries may be the most suitable option in some circumstances. The need to minimise travel also suggests that mixed use peripheral or corridor developments, well related to public transport routes, may provide the opportunity to minimise the growth of traffic and accompanying emissions. Where no white land had been included in plans local authorities regretted its absence. There would appear no advantage in placing a specific time period, in terms of years, on the phrase 'long term'. However, it would be most useful if the phrase referred to well beyond the plan period [5.13-5.25].

23. *The issue of the extent of, and policies to be applied in, white land should be clarified.*

Circular 14/84 states that the normal processes of development control will apply in white land. Advice in Circular 50/57 suggests a model policy whereby the same land use prescription should be applied as in the Green Belt. However the Department does not now favour 'presumption against' policies outside the Green Belt. Some authorities prefer a development control policy which suggests no development should occur which would prejudice later comprehensive development. White land should be capable of development if needed in the medium term. Policies in the interim should protect valuable wildlife and landscape features and recreational access. Such land should be well related to infrastructure and existing and planned public transport facilities [5.23-5.24; 6.18].

*It is recommended that:*

- R.29 *Where exceptional circumstances for the alteration of Green Belts have been substantiated in structure plans these should not need to be established again at site level [5.9].*
- R.30 *Where new Green Belts are being proposed local authorities would need to demonstrate what major changes in circumstances had made the adoption of this exceptional measure necessary, and why normal development control or other policies would not be adequate [5.11-5.12].*
- R.31 *Green Belt boundaries should be regarded as enduring well beyond the plan period. The provision of safeguarded land would be a normal requirement in development plans for Green Belts, unless local authorities could demonstrate where development would be located over the succeeding twenty years [5.19-5.25].*
- R.32 *If a local authority is not proposing to provide white land in its plan it should justify the circumstances that have led to this decision [5.19-5.25].*
- R.33 *Development control policy in white land should state that no development should occur which would prejudice later comprehensive development. Policies should, in particular, protect valuable wildlife and landscape features, and existing access for recreation [5.24].*
- R.34 *White land should be well related to existing and planned infrastructure including public transport facilities [5.24].*

## Transport and Vehicle Emissions

24. *Contained patterns of development can support policies which are designed to reduce the need to travel.*

The literature reviewed, and expert opinion, suggests containment policies can assist in creating more sustainable patterns of development. The influence of land use planning is likely to be long-term. Shorter term reductions in the growth of pollution are more likely through public transport enhancement, and such measures as the pricing of road and car parking space. Green Belts are important because they control costly private car-dependent sprawl, creating compact forms of development, thus minimizing the distances between activities [6.9-6.13].

25. *Green Belts allow issues of the relative concentration or dispersal of activities at the sub-regional level, and their transport implications, to be clearly addressed.*

Because most Green Belts cover a number of local authority areas they can implement decisions made on the balance between urban intensification, peripheral development and additions to small freestanding towns and villages at sub-regional level. Scottish Office advice makes this sub-regional role more explicit than advice in England, stating that in defining Green Belts authorities should relate the demand for all forms of development to a long-term settlement strategy for the plan area [6.14-6.16].

26. *Where there is a requirement for the development of greenfield sites, principles of sustainable development may conflict with policies for the retention of existing Green Belt boundaries.*

If Green Belt boundaries are too tight, in the absence of urban infill new development will be pushed beyond them. If Green Belts are too wide the distance between activities will be unnecessarily increased. The result will be wasteful extra journeys, often by private car. Given these problems, well-contained urban peripheral developments and, occasionally, free-standing settlements along public transport corridors within and beyond city fringes, may be the preferred 'models'. If principles of sustainability are to be given greater importance in the future then the re-drawing of the inner boundaries of some Green Belts may be necessary. These principles will need to extend to the definition of white land [6.14-6.17].

*It is recommended that:*

- R.35 *Local authorities should take account of the need to promote sustainable patterns of development when drawing up Green Belt boundaries in development plans [6.14-6.17].*

- R.36 *The boundaries of white land should also create the potential for compact forms of development well-related to public transport [6.14-6.18].*
- R.37 *Green Belt boundaries should represent the outcome of a considered judgement on the sustainability attributes of development in urban areas, development beyond the Green Belt, or development by additions to towns and villages within it [6.14-6.16].*
- R.38 *The possibility of freestanding new settlements located along very high quality public transport corridors in the Green Belt should be evaluated in deciding on settlement strategies [6.17].*

### *Preserving the Special Character of Historic Towns*

- 2.26 This purpose has always been more sparingly deployed. In the late 1950s York, Chester, Oxford and Cambridge, a group of compact small cities with special character subject to high development pressures, instigated Green Belt policies. In 1988 the guidance added 'historic' to the purpose, thus making clear that new proposals around smaller settlements generally were not welcomed. Currently Norwich is seeking a new Green Belt using the special character argument and, in the last 15 years, coverage has been extended in areas such as Harrogate and Lancaster.
- 2.27 An analysis of policies relating to historic towns suggests that Green Belt has had various rationales. It has been used in different situations to:
- protect the *green and open fabric* of such cities, keeping open extensive belts of land which form important parts of the setting of town centres, neighbourhoods or groups of buildings;
  - protect *gateways*, by keeping open approaches to a city, and providing a clear *definition* of town and country;
  - protect the wider *setting* of a city. This may comprise, as in the case of Oxford, keeping open areas of higher ground which provide a green background to the City, and help give it a distinctive character; and
  - seek control over the size of a city, with a view to influencing the *level of activity* which requires to be accommodated in its historic core, thus protecting the character.
- 2.28 In Oxford the special character arguments have been combined with the other two classic purposes of Green Belt set out in Circular 42/55. The Explanatory Memorandum to the 1987 Structure Plan gives the rationale well:

'... the special character of Oxford ... means not just the University heritage areas and the views of the 'dreaming spires' from outside the City, but a much broader concept including the countryside around the City, the Cherwell and Thames floodplains and the relationship of adjoining settlements to the City. Character also includes a concept of the overall scale of activity in the City, since any considerable growth of the City will generate more activity, more traffic and pressures for further development which are all likely to threaten the nature, character and setting of the City'.<sup>20</sup>

This presents the interpretation that the Green Belt instrument can directly affect the overall scale of activity in the City. In the case of York the City Council sees the protection of the green wedges which run into the heart of the City as the critical element in preserving its historic character. The boundary in these areas should be inalienable in contrast to some parts of the outer edges

of the built-up area where policy is more a matter of managing urban form. The firmness of boundaries in these outer areas would depend on long-term needs.

### *Green Belts and Environmental Capacity*

- 229 The question of how far the policy should be used to limit the size of cities according to a notion of environmental capacity has gained importance recently. In comments on the Oxfordshire Structure Plan the Department suggested Oxford 'may have reached its limits', and that there was only very limited scope for further growth. This has been reiterated in the case of Chester where the Cheshire Replacement Structure Plan approval letter states '... Chester may, if its historic character is to be maintained, be reaching the limits of its growth'.<sup>21</sup>
- 230 The approval process of the Cheshire Structure Plan gave an opportunity for a number of these issues to be debated. The County and District proposed the alteration of the Green Belt on the southern and northern edges of Chester to develop 320 hectares for industry, offices and housing. Table 2.7 summarises the various proposals.

Table 2.7: The Chester Proposals

	Structure Plan	EIP Panel	Department Approved
new employment land	210 ha	150 ha	100 ha
dwellings	7,800	7,100	6,100
land from green belt	320 ha	100 ha	none

Source: EIP Panel Report and Structure Plan approval letter

- 231 The Examination in Public Panel summarised the issues in their report. Those proposing the highest rate of growth saw the City as having an international profile. Marketing the City as an attractive place to live and work had brought increased prosperity and economic activity. There was a need for a greater number of jobs in the North West Region. A continuation of this process, it was argued, would also provide for local needs by diversifying the employment base. Although such a strategy would have consequences for the Green Belt the resulting demands would be manageable. The extra infrastructure provided with the new development, notably a new section of ring road, would avoid unacceptable traffic demands on the historic core of the City. A more buoyant growth situation would help sustain conservation of the historic core by providing greater resources. The counter arguments suggested that development would increase the level of activity in the City and do

irretrievable harm to its historic core. Extra increases in traffic, and redevelopment activity in the centre could result. A 'precautionary approach' should be taken by the local authorities if the effects of extra growth could not be predicted with certainty.

- 2.32 The Examination in Public Panel felt it was inappropriate for Chester to assume what amounted to a Regional role in growth promotion. They concluded that the proposals in the Structure Plan were not compatible with preserving the historic character of Chester, and therefore proposed a continuation of development at broadly past rates (see Table 2.7). This would have involved the release of three non-strategic, Green Belt sites. In the final approval letter, however, the Department took a more restrictive view suggesting that, with present information, it was doubtful whether releasing more land could be accomplished without damaging the historic centre, or harming the character of the City as a whole. Table 2.8 lists the way the Department interprets Green Belt purposes in the Chester area.

Table 2.8: Roles of the Green Belt Around Chester

1. 'The Green Belt of North Cheshire and the Wirral has played an important role in supporting urban regeneration in Greater Manchester and Merseyside'.
2. 'Chester's Green Belt has an important role in maintaining the separation of settlements' ... especially between Chester and Ellesmere Port.
3. '... and of preventing the spread of development into open countryside'
4. 'The Chester Green Belt has an additional function of safeguarding the historic City, both its setting as a whole and its special character, particularly that of its central core'.

Source: Department of the Environment approval letter.<sup>22</sup>

- 2.33 The basic problem is that many of the links in the arguments being made were not conclusively supported by evidence. It proved difficult to make irrefutable links between the scale and rate of peripheral development proposed, and its impact on the historic core of the City. How far the concept of 'environmental capacity', introduced by the Council for the Protection of Rural England and English Heritage, could be translated into an operable decision-making structure, was also unclear.<sup>23</sup> The likely impact of traffic management measures proposed by the local authorities was not sufficient to convince those vetting the Plan that the precautionary principle should not prevail. Further work on what constitutes the special character of the City, and its ability to absorb growth, was recommended by the Panel.

- 2.34 The role of the Green Belt in protecting the character and identify of historic towns, by maintaining important green wedges and open land providing clear definition between town and country, has a well-established pedigree. Green Belt boundaries around historic cities are particularly tight, and future development requirements have been assessed conservatively. It is less clear how far peripheral restraint is necessarily linked to the more effective conservation of their historic core areas. In the case of Oxford, for example, despite more than firm Green Belt restraints there has been considerable growth in retail and office floorspace over the past fifteen years. The level of vehicle penetration to the historic core has however remained similar for twenty years despite more than a 30 per cent increase in car ownership nationally. This has been achieved by a traffic restraint policy and the introduction of a Park and Ride system. Peripheral restraint has acted as a backcloth to these more interventionist transport measures.

#### *Assisting Urban Regeneration*

- 2.35 Assisting urban regeneration was introduced as a purpose of Green Belts following the House of Commons Environment Select Committee inquiry in 1984. MPs at that time agreed with the Greater Manchester Council that '... Green Belt, originally conceived as a way of containing growth, has now become essential to dealing with the problems of decline...'.<sup>24</sup> Green Belts would have particular justification where derelict land in urban areas continued to be created and not effectively re-used. However it was never intended that Green Belts would 'deliver' urban regeneration on their own. Other complementary policies, going well beyond the denial of some land and sites on urban peripheries, would be required.
- 2.36 In this situation the term 'urban regeneration' has assumed a variety of meanings dependent on the local authority involved. In some cases it may be the intention of focusing on some form of economic priority area in the *inner city*. For others it may involve securing the redevelopment of brown land in urban areas generally, before greenfield sites are utilized. It may also imply that by denying some choices on the urban periphery developers will restrict their attention to land allocated in plans, or to more actively seeking out redevelopment and re-use possibilities within urban areas. In practice the attraction of jobs may be regarded by local authorities as more important than any land development objective *per se*. No studies have been carried out to test the hypothesis that firm containment has specific effects in assisting regeneration, although in the West Midlands it is accepted as a requirement for effective monitoring of the Regional Strategy.
- 2.37 The geography and administrative complexity of city regions also make any analysis of the outcomes of this aspect of policy difficult. The denial of development opportunities at the urban fringe is more likely to lead to the development of sites with similar attributes in other parts of the outer city. This may involve leap-frogging beyond the Green Belt, or development by intensification of uses in towns inset within it. The inner city, it has been

## 5. THE PERMANENCE OF GREEN BELTS

### *The Current Guidance*

5.1 Questions of permanence, and the circumstances in which Green Belts may be adjusted, remain contentious. Much time is spent in negotiation between the Regional Offices of the Department and local authorities on issues such as how far safeguarded land, sometimes termed 'white land', should be provided between urban areas and the Green Belt for long-term needs. Some of our consultees saw the current Guidance as insufficiently clear or detailed to govern the process of accommodation between Government, local authorities and other groups, which arriving at an agreed Green Belt boundary involves.

5.2 The current wording of policy can be traced back to discussions in the House of Commons Environment Committee in 1984. Guidance in PPG 2 states:

'... the essential characteristic of Green Belts is their permanence and their protection must be maintained as far as can be seen ahead'.

Alterations to the general extent of a Green Belt, once approved, should only occur if 'exceptional circumstances' can be demonstrated by the local authority. Similarly, boundaries in approved local plans or earlier development plans should only be altered 'exceptionally'. No elaboration is given of what might comprise exceptional circumstances.

5.3 Green Belts are long-term. When drawing up new, or revised, development plans local authorities should ensure that Green Belt proposals:

'... should be related to a timescale which is longer than normally adopted for other aspects of the plan'.

The test of the long term nature of a Green Belt in a local plan is also put forward:

'... the local authority should be able to demonstrate that Green Belt boundaries will not necessarily need to be altered at the end of the plan period. In *some cases* this will mean safeguarding land between the urban area and the Green Belt which may be required to meet longer-term development needs' (Authors' emphasis).

Circular 14/84 says that such land should be protected by the normal processes of development control.<sup>1</sup>

- 5.4 The House of Commons Environment Committee inquiry in 1984 pointed to the potential confusion between the idea of permanence and the notion of a long-term policy extending an indefinite time beyond the end date of a plan. Green Belts were not seen, by any of those giving evidence, as literally permanent or immutable. They were regarded as creating a *presumption against development for an indefinite period*. This implies that when a Green Belt is defined in a plan, it should endure as far ahead as can be foreseen, and that there should be no prospect of changing the designation. The security of a Green Belt would also be enhanced if sufficient development land for predicted long-term needs can be shown to exist in the vicinity.<sup>3</sup>

#### *Exceptional Circumstances*

- 5.5 Our consultees basically agreed with the Environment Committee approach to permanence. None suggested Green Belts were immutable. There were circumstances, it was suggested, in which Green Belts could be altered. Most stressed the need to consider alterations within the process of development plan preparation and review. A number of local authorities interviewed wanted further advice on what might constitute exceptional circumstances. At present the local authority makes a reasoned case in a structure plan alteration or replacement. The Examination in Public Panel then forms a view. The discretion to decide what constitute exceptional circumstances resides with the Secretary of State who may alter the policies in the plan. In this way the national interest in sustaining the policy, and its consistency, is managed.
- 5.6 Within our case study areas there are a number of examples where exceptional circumstances have been argued. The main triggers for proposed changes have been changed economic circumstances (particularly the need for attractive greenfield sites for employment purposes), sub-regional growth demands (for example, in conjunction with development near airports), and demands for new housing. More locally, infilling to new by-pass roads has also caused some proposals for change. The Department has accepted a number of specific propositions, but not the view that exceptional circumstances justify a general re-assessment of the boundaries of an approved Green Belt across a whole County.
- 5.7 The outcomes of a number of recent cases are listed in Table 5.1. The main reasons for proposed deletions have been economic circumstances, such as sub-regional growth related to Gatwick Airport (land in Surrey), regional economic imbalance (Dartford, Kent) and shortages of land for high technology-related jobs (Cambridge). In the West Midlands a range of high quality sites have been released from the Green Belt, and the same has occurred in Wakefield. In Hertfordshire four significant proposals for deletions from approved Green Belt have been handled through the Structure Plan process. The need for housing land is more difficult to argue as an exceptional circumstance than other uses. In the case of Stevenage (Hertfordshire) land was deleted from the Green Belt because there was no white land in the District, whilst in Dacorum a proposal to release land on the edge of Hemel Hempstead was rejected, the

Table 5.1: Exceptional Circumstances in Structure Plans

argument	area	outcome
<i>Proposed Green Belt Deletions</i>		
uniquely extensive area of glasshouse dereliction	Broxbourne Herts	accepted, 1988 Structure Plan
no allowance for long-term development needs, housing	Stevenage Herts	accepted, 1988 Structure Plan
housing needs of District	Dacorum Herts	not accepted, 1988 Structure Plan
4000 dwellings on low density housing area, infrastructure improvements, protect areas of conservation importance elsewhere, Grange Estate	East Dorset Dorset	not accepted, 1990 South East Dorset Structure Plan, First Alteration
<i>Proposed Green Belt Additions</i>		
encroachment into the countryside; coalescence	East Herts Herts	not accepted, 1992 First Alteration
coalescence, protect countryside, control expansion of Markyate; regeneration of Luton	Dacorum Herts	not accepted 1992 First Alteration
control expansion of Royston	North Herts Herts	not accepted, 1988 Structure Plan
control growth of Alderholt, coalescence argument	East Dorset Dorset	not yet decided
manage growth in relation to Stanstead Airport; at Bishops Stortford	East Herts Herts	accepted, with large area of white land, 1988 Structure Plan
<i>Others</i>		
shortage of land and sites with potential for high tech industry associated with University	City of Cambridge Cambridgeshire	accepted, Replacement Structure Plan 1989
achieving balance between east and west of Region, changed circumstances, mixed uses	Dartford Kent	accepted, Structure Plan, Second Alteration 1990
sub-regional growth needs associated with Gatwick growth, lack of alternative areas for longer-term large scale development	Horley Surrey	accepted, 1989 Structure Plan, First Alteration

Source: Structure Plan Approval Letters

Department stating '... the fact that there is pressure for development does not constitute the exceptional circumstances which warrant altering the Green Belt'.<sup>3</sup> However, where housing needs cannot be accommodated entirely within existing urban boundaries, some revisions to Green Belts in local plans have been accepted. Development in South Staffordshire in the early 1980s, and on the southern edge of Macclesfield, may be prominent cases here.<sup>4</sup>

- 5.8 Some Authorities, such as Cheshire and Hertfordshire, have sought policies which would allow the small-scale revision of Green Belt boundaries, as part of the local plan preparation process. The view is that these are matters which are not of structural importance. Whilst allowing minor technical adjustments, to take account of appeal decisions or drafting errors, the Department have not been prepared to accept there is a small-scale level of adjustment which can be allowed as a general rule, and which is left to local discretion. The dangers of acceptance would be the risk of continuous nibbling at Green Belt in short-term policy reviews. Judgements on how far alterations proposed in District Local Plans may be regarded as of structural importance will continue to be made, in the last resort, by Regional Offices of the Department, in the absence of more precise guidance.
- 5.9 Current guidance suggests that Green Belt boundaries in approved local plans can be altered only exceptionally.<sup>5</sup> This has been interpreted as a requirement at the district level to justify exceptional circumstances on a site by site basis. The situation is now arising where development requirements, agreed in a Structure Plan, are accepted by all parties to imply the alteration of Green Belt boundaries in a specific district at the next review of the local plan. In this circumstance, the district is being asked to prove exceptional circumstances when it is, in effect, merely searching its urban boundaries and development insets for the least environmentally-damaging sites. In South Staffordshire this situation has occurred following approval of the Structure Plan in 1990. What is being sought is assurance that there are no reasonable alternatives to the alteration of the Green Belt, by developing other sites in towns or villages contained by and beyond the Green Belt. This follows the advice in PPG 2.
- 5.10 Priorities for land release, when development requirements have been established, are listed in the West Midlands Regional Guidance. They state:
- as much development as possible, subject to other policies, should be on sites within the present built-up areas;
  - for development which has to be outside the present built-up areas, as much as possible should be in areas not covered by Green Belt policies;
  - for development which cannot be located in the above two categories, as much as possible should be accommodated through the careful drawing of Green Belt boundaries in areas where they have not yet been fully defined either in adopted local plans or development plans;

- only if a deficiency remains should alterations be contemplated to Green Belt boundaries which have already been defined in adopted local plans or the former development plans.<sup>6</sup>

These priorities appear an acceptable way forward which could be usefully deployed in other areas.

### *New Green Belts*

- 5.11 Although not specifically stated in guidance, it is also necessary for local authorities to prove exceptional circumstances for new Green Belts. This is because Green Belt policy has always been regarded as a special one, with its unique presumption against development. Experience of past cases suggests authorities are required to establish why the normal processes of development control are not sufficient to secure their current development intentions. It may be concluded that development pressures are not sufficient to necessitate Green Belt. These were the basic points made in the Department's recent rejection of the proposal for a Green Belt around Hull, in Cleveland, and in the rejection of a 100 sq km extension of Green Belt in East Hertfordshire, both in 1992.<sup>7</sup> Given the technical and political difficulties in altering Green Belts, once confirmed, Authorities have been asked how far introduction of the policy will unnecessarily restrict future room for manoeuvre, and whether other policies could achieve the same results. In response Authorities cite the simplicity, robustness and enforceability of the Green Belt as a policy instrument, and its ability to secure its objectives over the longer-term. This inter-generational element, for example the promise of protecting the scale and setting of a historic city for the foreseeable future, has a powerful appeal to planners and locally-elected representatives.
- 5.12 In the case of the recent proposal to create a new Green Belt around Norwich, the Eastern Region Office considered the following issues should be addressed by the parties:
- the scale of changes (changed circumstances) since the last review of the Structure Plan, which might justify the policy being introduced at this time;
  - whether the adverse effects of current development and other trends are those which the Green Belt instrument is designed to counter;
  - whether other policies would be appropriate, especially given the importance attached to approved policies in development plans in the 1991 Act; and
  - whether Green Belt would be too inflexible, compromising other objectives, such as those of allocating a ready supply of industrial and other development land.<sup>8</sup>

Future proposals for new Green Belts should be tested against the above criteria.

#### *Safeguarded Land and Long-Term Needs*

- 5.13 Only six of the sixteen Districts studied had safeguarded land (white land) in formally adopted plans. As progress is made in UDPs and district-wide local plans, a greater number of Authorities are introducing such land (see Table 5.2). The overall impression, however, is that most local authorities would prefer to rely on the possible alteration of Green Belts each time their plans are reviewed, thus avoiding the use of the safeguarded land mechanism. There are two basic situations here:
- where the Structure Plan states that the Green Belt is long-term (that is, is intended to apply for longer than the plan period), but this *does not* necessitate the definition of safeguarded land on the inner edge of the Green Belt; and
  - where the long term concept suggests that safeguarded land *will* be required, because the capacity for redevelopment and intensification in urban areas is limited.

Table 5.2: Safeguarded Land in Local Plans: Case Study Districts \*

	In adopted plans	in plan proposals
no	10	7
yes	6	9

\* England only

- 5.14 Examples of the former situation include Wolverhampton and Enfield, where it is argued that the redevelopment of sites within the urban envelope will suffice for local needs. Sheffield does not have safeguarded land in its approved Green Belt Subject Plan of 1983. Local policy makers would now like to have the room for manoeuvre that safeguarded land would have provided. Barnsley has no safeguarded land, it being argued that the District has plenty of land allocated for development and not taken up. In many ways the Green Belt is the 'real countryside' which remains.
- 5.15 In South East Dorset it was accepted that development requirements to 2001 could be accommodated within urban areas. It is stated:

'... He ... (the Secretary of State) ... considers that the present boundaries of the Green Belt should be broadly maintained and does not accept the Panel's view that land should be safeguarded for development after 2001'.<sup>9</sup>

The approved plan does not refer to long-term needs, but states that the built-up area of Bournemouth-Poole cannot continue to expand, and that the inner boundary of the Green Belt will therefore be regarded as its definitive limit for the foreseeable future. The relevant policy states that the inner boundary of the Green Belt 'will generally follow the edge of the main urban area'.<sup>10</sup> The Draft Verwood Local Plan (1991) interprets this policy as generally precluding the provision of 'white land' to allow for future outward growth around the edges of the built-up area beyond the Plan period.<sup>11</sup>

- 5.16 Where safeguarded land, or its equivalent, is provided the guidance states that normal development controls should be applied, and development plans should clearly state what the policies for such land are.<sup>12</sup> Table 5.3 gives examples of policy wordings adopted and proposed in plans. In Wakefield the areas of 'Presumption Against Development' (PAD) are seen as land which may be required to meet longer-term development needs. As long as adequate supplies of allocated land remain the PAD land will not be regarded as potential development land. The 388 hectares of PAD land, if developed at past rates, would last 25-30 years. In Macclesfield the circumstances of possible release of proposed 'Unallocated Land' are listed as:

- a review of the Structure Plan;
- where development cannot reasonably be sited within urban limits; or
- where the land is not also required for open space.<sup>13</sup>

In Oxford proposed 'Safeguarded Land' between the urban area and the Green Belt is regarded as an extra designation, also being protected for landscape or open space purposes. Only parts of it may be regarded as not contributing to Green Belt purposes.<sup>14</sup>

- 5.17 Development control policy in safeguarded areas is as strict, or more strict, than in Green Belt. For example, in PAD areas in Wakefield, only development which is necessary for the operation of existing uses is seen as acceptable. Some sport and recreation facilities, and institutional uses, would not be regarded as acceptable. It is most common, however, for the same policy as in the Green Belt generally to be applied to safeguarded land. The current view of the Department, however, is that 'presumption against' policies should be avoided outside Green Belt areas.

- 5.18 Although Green Belts are regarded as long-term, Governments have always resisted placing a specific time, in terms of years, on the concept. This, again, preserves an area of discretion within which discussions on the need for, scale

and type of safeguarded land can take place. A number of local authorities and consultees would prefer a specific time period to be stated in guidance. This would give a firmer indication of the scale of safeguarded land required. It would also help persuade local elected representatives, where doubt exists, that, the provision of such land is necessary. Most discussions of the concept, by Inspectors at inquiries, or in local authority literature, suggest 20-30 years equates to long-term, assuming structure plans look 10-15 years ahead. The House Builders Federation and York City Council recently re-iterated these arguments in relation to the York Green Belt.<sup>15</sup> If this is the case local authorities defending a Green Belt policy with no safeguarded land would need to be very sure about the possible adverse effects of intensification in their urban areas over such a period.

#### *Long-Term Green Belts*

- 5.19 A number of consultees felt the situation regarding safeguarded land, and the lack of firmer definition of the concept of 'long-term', unsatisfactory. Many saw it as creating delay as each new generation of planners re-learned the largely unwritten ground rules. Few, however, could chart a more appropriate way forward. The planners interviewed more often than not wanted safeguarded land. Where it did not exist they saw problems being stored up for the future. Local councillors, however, were not so willing to see safeguarded land in plans, especially if this required the politically unpalatable task of altering current boundaries (see para 5.13).
- 5.20 It appears that commitment to the concept of safeguarded land has varied through time. No reference to it was made in the 1955 Circular. The need to operationalize the long-term notion was the main reason for the production of the 1957 Circular. One of the main precursors of the 1984 Circular was the wish to remind local authorities of the need to avoid keeping land permanently open unnecessarily. The guidance on development plans in PPG 12, although referring to 'the proper definition' of Green Belt boundaries, stresses issues of the certainty of boundaries, rather than their long-term nature. The statement in PPG 2 that land will only 'in some cases' need to be safeguarded for longer-term needs has been the invitation for some to avoid addressing the full implications of the long-term issue locally.

# ANNEXE I vi

PLANNING POLICY GUIDANCE 1995

FULL TEXT.

# PLANNING POLICY GUIDANCE:

## GREEN BELTS

Planning Policy Guidance notes (PPGs) set out the Government's policies on different aspects of planning. Local planning authorities must take their content into account in preparing their development plans. The guidance may also be material to decisions on individual planning applications and appeals.

This PPG replaces the 1988 version of PPG2, and advice in Circulars. It:

- states the general intentions of Green Belt policy, including its contribution to sustainable development objectives;
- reaffirms the specific purposes of including land in Green Belts, with slight modifications;
- gives policy a more positive thrust by specifying for the first time objectives for the use of land in Green Belts;
- confirms that Green Belts must be protected as far as can be seen ahead, advises on defining boundaries and on safeguarding land for longer-term development needs; and
- maintains the presumption against inappropriate development within Green Belts and refines the categories of appropriate development, including making provision for the future of major existing developed sites and revising policy on the re-use of buildings.

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## 1. Introduction

1.1 The Government attaches great importance to Green Belts, which have been an essential element of planning policy for some four decades. The purposes of Green Belt policy and the related development control policies set out in 1955 remain valid today with remarkably little alteration.

### *History*

1.2 The first official proposal "to provide a reserve supply of public open spaces and of recreational areas and to establish a green belt or girdle of open space" was made by the Greater London Regional Planning Committee in 1935. New provisions for compensation in the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act allowed local authorities to incorporate green belt proposals in their first development plans. The codification of Green Belt policy and its extension to areas other than London came in 1955 with an historic Circular inviting local planning authorities to consider the establishment of Green Belts.

### *Extent*

1.3 The Green Belts approved through structure plans now cover approximately 1,556,000 hectares, about 12 per cent of England. There are 14 separate Green Belts, varying in size from 486,000 hectares around London to just 700 hectares at Burton-on-Trent. The general extent and location of the designated areas are given in the table and map opposite.

### *Intentions of policy*

1.4 The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the most important attribute of Green Belts is their openness. Green Belts can shape patterns of urban development at sub-regional and regional scale, and help to ensure that development occurs in locations allocated in development plans. They help to protect the countryside, be it in agricultural, forestry or other use. They can assist in moving towards more sustainable patterns of urban development (see paragraph 2.10).

### *Purposes of including land in Green Belts*

1.5 There are five purposes of including land in Green Belts:

- to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- to prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another;
- to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;

- to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

### *The use of land in Green Belts*

1.6 Once Green Belts have been defined, the use of land in them has a positive role to play in fulfilling the following objectives:

- to provide opportunities for access to the open countryside for the urban population;
- to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation near urban areas;
- 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 in agricultural, forestry and related uses.

1.7 The extent to which the use of land fulfils these objectives is however not itself a material factor in the inclusion of land within a Green Belt, or in its continued protection. For example, although Green Belts often contain areas of attractive landscape, the quality of the landscape is not relevant to the inclusion of land within a Green Belt or to its continued protection. The purposes of including land in Green Belts are of paramount importance to their continued protection, and should take precedence over the land use objectives.

## 2. Designation of Green Belts

2.1 The essential characteristic of Green Belts is their permanence. Their protection must be maintained as far as can be seen ahead.

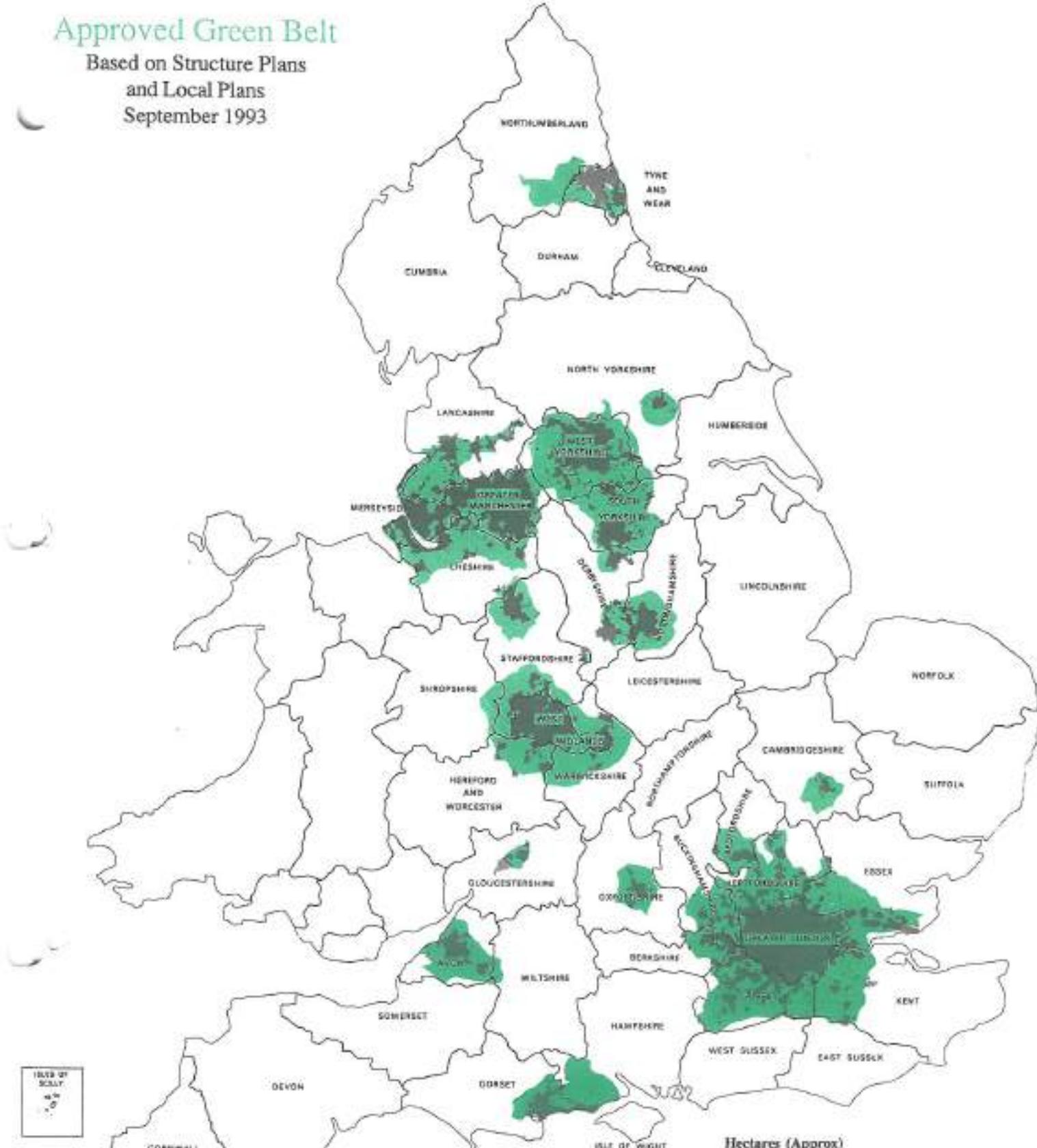
### *Regional guidance and development plans*

2.2 Regional and strategic planning guidance set the framework for Green Belt policy and settlement policy, including the direction of long-term development. Regional guidance focuses on issues which are of regional importance or which need to be considered on a wider geographical basis than that of individual structure plans. Strategic guidance performs a similar role in metropolitan areas.

2.3 Green Belts are established through development plans. Structure plans provide the strategic policy context for planning at local level. The general extent of Green Belts has been fixed through the approval of structure plans.

# Approved Green Belt

Based on Structure Plans  
and Local Plans  
September 1993



ISLES OF SCILLY



### Hectares (Approx)

Tyne & Wear	46,500
York	23,700
South & West Yorkshire	225,900
Gr. Manchester, Merseyside, Cheshire & Lancs (inc Lancaster & Fylde Coast)	241,700
Stoke on Trent	36,500
Nottingham, Derby	60,800
Barton-Swadincote	700
West Midlands	209,300
Cambridge	26,100
Gloucester, Cheltenham	8,100
Oxford	34,800
London	485,600
Avon	70,600
SW Hampshire/SE Dorset	85,400

**Total** 1,555,700

2.4 Many detailed Green Belt boundaries have been set in local plans and in old development plans, but in some areas detailed boundaries have not yet been defined. Up-to-date approved boundaries are essential, to provide certainty as to where Green Belt policies do and do not apply and to enable the proper consideration of future development options. The mandatory requirement for district-wide local plans, introduced by the Planning and Compensation Act 1991, will ensure that the definition of detailed boundaries is completed.

2.5 In metropolitan areas, unitary development plans (UDPs) perform the functions of structure and local plans.

#### *Defining boundaries*

2.6 Once the general extent of a Green Belt has been approved it should be altered only in exceptional circumstances. If such an alteration is proposed the Secretary of State will wish to be satisfied that the authority has considered opportunities for development within the urban areas contained by and beyond the Green Belt. Similarly, detailed Green Belt boundaries defined in adopted local plans or earlier approved development plans should be altered only exceptionally. Detailed boundaries should not be altered or development allowed merely because the land has become derelict.

2.7 Where existing local plans are being revised and updated, existing Green Belt boundaries should not be changed unless alterations to the structure plan have been approved, or other exceptional circumstances exist, which necessitate such revision.

2.8 Where detailed Green Belt boundaries have not yet been defined, it is necessary to establish boundaries that will endure. They should be carefully drawn so as not to include land which it is unnecessary to keep permanently open. Otherwise there is a risk that encroachment on the Green Belt may have to be allowed in order to accommodate future development. If boundaries are drawn excessively tightly around existing built-up areas it may not be possible to maintain the degree of permanence that Green Belts should have. This would devalue the concept of the Green Belt and reduce the value of local plans in making proper provision for necessary development in the future.

2.9. Wherever practicable a Green Belt should be several miles wide, so as to ensure an appreciable open zone all round the built-up area concerned. Boundaries should be clearly defined, using readily recognisable features such as roads, streams, belts of trees or woodland edges where possible. Well-defined long-term Green Belt boundaries help to ensure the future agricultural, recreational and amenity value of Green Belt land, whereas less secure boundaries would make it

more difficult for farmers and other landowners to maintain and improve their land. Further advice on land management is in Annex A.

2.10 When drawing Green Belt boundaries in development plans local planning authorities should take account of the need to promote sustainable patterns of development. They should consider the consequences for sustainable development (for example in terms of the effects on car travel) of channelling development towards urban areas inside the inner Green Belt boundary, towards towns and villages inset within the Green Belt, or towards locations beyond the outer Green Belt boundary.

2.11 Guidance on the treatment of existing villages in Green Belts is given in the box below. The advice on affordable housing in paragraph 3.4 is also relevant.

#### EXISTING VILLAGES

Development plans should treat existing villages in Green Belt areas in one of the following ways.

If it is proposed to allow *no new building* beyond the categories in the first three indents of paragraph 3.4 below, the village should be included within the Green Belt. The Green Belt notation should be carried across ("washed over") it.

If *infilling only* is proposed, the village should either be "washed over" and listed in the development plan or should be inset (that is, excluded from the Green Belt). The local plan should include policies to ensure that any infill does not have an adverse effect on the character of the village concerned. If the village is washed over, the local plan may need to define infill boundaries to avoid dispute over whether particular sites are covered by infill policies.

If *limited development* (more than infilling) or *limited expansion* is proposed, the village should be inset. Development control policies for such settlements should be included in the local plan.

#### *Safeguarded land*

2.12 When local planning authorities prepare new or revised structure and local plans, any proposals affecting Green Belts should be related to a time-scale which is longer than that normally adopted for other aspects of the plan. They should satisfy themselves that Green Belt boundaries will not need to be altered at the end of the plan period. In order to ensure protection of Green Belts within this longer time-scale, this will in some cases mean safeguarding land between the urban area and the Green Belt which may be required to meet longer-term development needs. Regional/strategic guidance should provide a strategic framework for considering this issue. In preparing and reviewing their development plans

authorities should address the possible need to provide safeguarded land. They should consider the broad location of anticipated development beyond the plan period, its effects on urban areas contained by the Green Belt and on areas beyond it, and its implications for sustainable development. In non-metropolitan areas these questions should in the first instance be addressed in the structure plan, which should where necessary indicate a general area where local plans should identify safeguarded land.

2.13 Annex B gives further advice on safeguarded land, which is sometimes known as "white land".

#### *New Green Belts*

2.14 Proposals for new Green Belts should be considered through the Regional/Strategic Guidance or Structure Plan process in the first instance. If a local planning authority proposes to establish a new Green Belt, it should demonstrate why normal planning and development control policies would not be adequate, and whether any major changes in circumstances have made the adoption of this exceptional measure necessary. It should also show what the consequences of the proposal would be for sustainable development.

### 3. Control over development

#### *Presumption against inappropriate development*

3.1 The general policies controlling development in the countryside apply with equal force in Green Belts but there is, in addition, a general presumption against inappropriate development within them. Such development should not be approved, except in very special circumstances. See paragraphs 3.4, 3.8, 3.11 and 3.12 below as to development which is inappropriate.

3.2 Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt. It is for the applicant to show why permission should be granted. Very special circumstances to justify inappropriate development will not exist unless the harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations. In view of the presumption against inappropriate development, the Secretary of State will attach substantial weight to the harm to the Green Belt when considering any planning application or appeal concerning such development.

3.3 Green Belt policies in development plans should ensure that any planning applications for inappropriate development would not be in accord with the plan. These exceptional cases would thus be treated as departures from the development plan, to be referred to the Secretary of State under

the Town and Country Planning (Development Plans and Consultation) Directions 1992 (see DOE Circular 19/92).

#### *New buildings*

3.4 The construction of new buildings inside a Green Belt is inappropriate unless it is for the following purposes:

- agriculture and forestry (unless permitted development rights have been withdrawn - see paragraph D2 of Annex D);
- essential facilities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation, for cemeteries, and for other uses of land which preserve the openness of the Green Belt and which do not conflict with the purposes of including land in it (see paragraph 3.5 below);
- limited extension, alteration or replacement of existing dwellings (subject to paragraph 3.6 below);
- limited infilling in existing villages (under the circumstances described in the box following paragraph 2.11), and limited affordable housing for local community needs under development plan policies according with PPG3 (see Annex E, and the box following paragraph 2.11); or
- limited infilling or redevelopment of major existing developed sites identified in adopted local plans, which meets the criteria in paragraph C3 or C4 of Annex C<sup>1</sup>.

3.5 Essential facilities (see second indent of paragraph 3.4) should be genuinely required for uses of land which preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land in it. Possible examples of such facilities include small changing rooms or unobtrusive spectator accommodation for outdoor sport, or small stables for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation.

3.6 Provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the *original* building, the extension or alteration of dwellings is not inappropriate in Green Belts. The replacement of existing dwellings need not be inappropriate, providing the new dwelling is not materially larger than the dwelling it replaces. Development plans should make clear the approach local planning authorities will take, including the circumstances (if any) under which replacement dwellings are acceptable.

#### *Re-use of buildings*

3.7 With suitable safeguards, the re-use of buildings should not prejudice the openness of Green Belts, since the buildings are already there. It can help to secure the continuing stewardship

<sup>1</sup> See also the transitional provision of paragraph C14 regarding redundant hospital sites and paragraph C17 regarding higher and further education establishments not identified in adopted local plans.

of land, especially by assisting farmers in diversifying their enterprises, and may contribute to the objectives for the use of land in Green Belts. The alternative to re-use may be a building that is left vacant and prone to vandalism and dereliction.

3.8 The re-use of buildings inside a Green Belt is not inappropriate development providing:

- (a) it does not have a materially greater impact than the present use on the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land in it;
- (b) strict control is exercised over the extension of re-used buildings, and over any associated uses of land surrounding the building which might conflict with the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land in it (e.g. because they involve extensive external storage, or extensive hardstanding, car parking, boundary walling or fencing);
- (c) the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction, and are capable of conversion without major or complete reconstruction; and
- (d) the form, bulk and general design of the buildings are in keeping with their surroundings<sup>1</sup>. (Conversion proposals may be more acceptable if they respect local building styles and materials, though the use of equivalent natural materials that are not local should not be ruled out).

3.9 If a proposal for the re-use of a building in the Green Belt does not meet the criteria in paragraph 3.8, or there are other specific and convincing planning reasons for refusal (for example on environmental or traffic grounds), the local planning authority should not reject the proposal without considering whether, by imposing reasonable conditions, any objections could be overcome. It should not normally be necessary to consider whether the building is no longer needed for its present agricultural or other purposes<sup>2</sup>. Evidence that the building is not redundant in its present use is not by itself sufficient grounds for refusing permission for a proposed new use.

3.10 Local planning authorities should include in their development plans policies for the re-use of buildings in Green Belts, having regard to the advice above and in Annex D of this PPG.

#### *Mining operations, and other development*

3.11 Minerals can be worked only where they are found. Their extraction is a temporary activity. Mineral extraction need not be inappropriate

<sup>1</sup> If a planning application is submitted for the re-use of a building which the local planning authority considers has a significant adverse effect on the landscape in terms of visual amenity, it may be appropriate in connection with any proposed structural changes to impose conditions to secure an improvement in the external appearance of the building.

<sup>2</sup> In the case of a tenanted agricultural building, the value in planning terms of the existing use should however be taken into consideration.

development: it need not conflict with the purposes of including land in Green Belts, provided that high environmental standards are maintained and that the site is well restored. Mineral and local planning authorities should include appropriate policies in their development plans. Mineral planning authorities should ensure that planning conditions for mineral working sites within Green Belts achieve suitable environmental standards and restoration. Relevant advice is in MPG2 and MPG7. Paragraph 3.13 below is also relevant to mineral extraction.

3.12 The statutory definition of development includes engineering and other operations, and the making of any material change in the use of land. The carrying out of such operations and the making of material changes in the use of land are inappropriate development unless they maintain openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land in the Green Belt. (Advice on material changes in the use of buildings is given in paragraph 3.8 above).

#### *Land use objectives*

3.13 When any large-scale development or redevelopment of land occurs in the Green Belt (including mineral extraction, the tipping of waste, and road and other infrastructure developments or improvements), it should, so far as possible contribute to the achievement of the objectives for the use of land in Green Belts (see paragraph 1.6 above). This approach applies to large-scale developments irrespective of whether they are appropriate development<sup>3</sup>, or inappropriate development which is justified by very special circumstances. Development plans should make clear the local planning authority's intended approach.

3.14 Planning obligations may be used to offset the loss of or impact on any amenity present on a site prior to development (see DoE Circular 16/91). In the case where amenity on a site adjacent to the Green Belt is lost as a result of development on that site, it may be reasonable for obligations to provide for offsetting benefits on land in the Green Belt, as long as there is a direct relationship between the two sites.

#### *Visual amenity*

3.15 The visual amenities of the Green Belt should not be injured by proposals for development within or conspicuous from the Green Belt which, although they would not prejudice the purposes of including land in Green Belts, might be visually detrimental by reason of their siting, materials or design.

#### *Community Forests*

3.16 Community Forests offer valuable opportunities for improving the environment around towns, by upgrading the landscape and

<sup>3</sup> But see paragraph CA of Annex C regarding the redevelopment of major developed sites.

providing for recreation and wildlife. An approved Community Forest plan may be a material consideration in preparing development plans and in deciding planning applications. Any development proposals within Community Forests in the Green Belt should be subject to the normal policies controlling development in Green Belts, and should respect the woodland setting.

#### 4. Cancellation of advice

4.1 The following advice is hereby cancelled:

PPG2 (January 1988);

paragraphs 1-3 of Annex D to PPG12 (February 1992);

paragraph 34 of PPG17 (September 1991), except the first sentence;

DOE Circular 12/91;

DOE Circular 14/84, including the Annex reproducing MHLG Circulars 42/55 and 50/57.

## ANNEX A: LAND MANAGEMENT

A1 Local authorities can assist landowners in maintaining and improving their land by working together with them, with voluntary organisations including Groundwork Trusts, and with statutory bodies such as the Countryside Commission, the Forestry Commission, and (where significant areas of derelict or vacant land are involved) English Partnerships. The aim should be to enhance the countryside, and especially those areas of land within the Green Belt or adjacent to it which are suffering from disuse or neglect.

A2 This is particularly important in areas that are close to existing urban development, or within conurbations, and which can be especially vulnerable to neglect or damage. They may come under intense pressure for development, and if so need to be protected and maintained. But in considering whether to include such areas of land within the Green Belt, where detailed boundaries have not yet been established, authorities should also consider carefully whether the land should be better reserved for future development and thus ease the pressure on other land that should have the long-term protection of the Green Belt. The overall aim should be to develop and maintain a positive approach to land management which *both* makes adequate provision for necessary development *and* ensures that the Green Belt serves its proper purpose.

## ANNEX B: SAFEGUARDED LAND

B1 This guidance supplements that in paragraph 2.12, and should be read in conjunction with it.

### *Identifying safeguarded land*

B2 Safeguarded land comprises areas and sites which may be required to serve development needs in the longer term, i.e. well beyond the plan period. It should be genuinely capable of development when needed.

B3 Safeguarded land should be located where future development would be an efficient use of land, well integrated with existing development, and well related to public transport and other existing and planned infrastructure, so promoting sustainable development.

B4 In identifying safeguarded land local planning authorities should take account of the advice on housing in PPG3 and on transport in PPG13. They should also have regard to environmental and landscape quality (so far as is consistent with paragraph 1.7 of this PPG); to the contribution which future redevelopment might make to remedying urban fringe problems, producing attractive, well-landscaped urban edges; and to the advice in PPG7 on protecting the best agricultural land.

### *Development control policies*

B5 Development plans should state clearly the policies applying to safeguarded land over the period covered by the plan. They should make clear that the land is not allocated for development at the present time, and keep it free to fulfil its purpose of meeting possible longer-term development needs. No development which would prejudice later comprehensive development should be permitted (though temporary developments may assist in ensuring that the land is properly looked after). Valuable landscape and wildlife features and existing access for recreation should be protected.

B6 Development plan policies should provide that planning permission for the permanent development of safeguarded land should only be granted following a local plan or UDP review which proposes the development of particular areas of safeguarded land. Making safeguarded land available for permanent development in other circumstances would thus be a departure from the plan.

## ANNEX C: FUTURE OF MAJOR DEVELOPED SITES IN THE GREEN BELT

C1 Green Belts contain some major developed sites such as factories, collieries, power stations, water and sewage treatment works, military establishments, civil airfields, hospitals, and research and education establishments. These substantial sites may be in continuing use or be redundant. They often pre-date the town and country planning system and the Green Belt designation.

C2 These sites remain subject to development control policies for Green Belts, and the Green Belt notation should be carried across them. If a major developed site is specifically identified for the purposes of this Annex in an adopted local plan or UDP, infilling or redevelopment which meets the criteria in paragraph C3 or C4 is not inappropriate development. In this context, infilling means the filling of small gaps between built development.

### *Infilling*

C3 Limited infilling at major developed sites in continuing use may help to secure jobs and prosperity without further prejudicing the Green Belt. Where this is so, local planning authorities may in their development plans identify the site, defining the boundary of the present extent of development and setting out a policy for limited infilling for the continuing use within this boundary. Such infilling should:

- (a) have no greater impact on the purposes of including land in the Green Belt (paragraph 1.5 above) than the existing development;
- (b) not exceed the height of the existing buildings; and
- (c) not lead to a major increase in the developed proportion of the site.

### *Redevelopment*

C4 Whether they are redundant or in continuing use, the complete or partial redevelopment of major developed sites may offer the opportunity for environmental improvement without adding to their impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land within it. Where this is the case, local planning authorities may in their development plans identify the site, setting out a policy for its future redevelopment. They should consider preparing a site brief. Redevelopment should:

- (a) have no greater impact than the existing development on the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land in it, and where possible have less;

(b) contribute to the achievement of the objectives for the use of land in Green Belts (paragraph 1.6 above – see also paragraph 3.13);

(c) not exceed the height of the existing buildings; and

(d) not occupy a larger area of the site than the existing buildings (unless this would achieve a reduction in height which would benefit visual amenity).

C5 The relevant area for the purposes of (d) is the aggregate ground floor area of the existing buildings (the “footprint”), *excluding* temporary buildings, open spaces with direct external access between wings of a building, and areas of hardstanding.

C6 The character and dispersal of proposed redevelopment will need to be considered as well as its footprint. For example many houses may together have a much smaller footprint than a few large buildings, but may be unacceptable because their dispersal over a large part of the site and enclosed gardens may have an adverse impact on the character of the Green Belt compared with the current development. The location of the new buildings should be decided having regard to the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land in it, 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. For instance it may be more appropriate to site new development closer to existing buildings.

C7 The site should be considered as a whole, whether or not all the buildings are to be redeveloped. The test of area in paragraph C5 relates to the redevelopment of the entire site; any proposals for *partial* redevelopment should be put forward in the context of comprehensive, long-term plans for the site as a whole.

C8 Proposals should be considered in the light of all material considerations, including for example visual amenity (see paragraph 3.15 of this PPG) and the traffic and travel implications of redevelopment (see PPG13).

C9 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 for the purposes of paragraph C5. These should be agreed between the local planning authority and the landowner.

C10 In granting any planning permission local authorities may wish to consider whether to impose conditions to ensure that buildings which are not to be retained permanently are demolished as new buildings are erected, thus keeping the total developed area under control.

### *Architectural and historic interest*

C11 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*.

C12 Local planning authorities should have regard to the desirability of preserving gardens and grounds of special historic interest. The English Heritage register of historic gardens lists sites of particular importance (see PPG15).

### *Public expenditure*

C13 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. Local planning authorities should take account of any additional infrastructure requirements (e.g. roads) which may have significant adverse effects on the Green Belt. Adequate financial provision should where necessary be made for the future maintenance of landscaped areas (taking account of advice in DoE Circular 16/91, *Planning Obligations*).

### *Redundant hospitals*

C14 The special position of redundant hospitals in Green Belts was recognised in DoE Circular 12/91 and earlier advice. That Circular is cancelled by this PPG; hospitals are covered by this Annex. As a transitional measure, pending the next local plan or UDP review, the redevelopment of redundant hospital sites which are not identified in development plans but meet the criteria in paragraph C4 above is not inappropriate development.

### *Higher and further education establishments*

C15 Previous policy allowed "institutions standing in extensive grounds" to undertake new development, because such institutions pre-dated Green Belt policy. It was unclear how much new development was permitted. More recently this provision has been used to press for wholly new development on a scale that is inappropriate in the Green Belt. This revision of PPG2 makes it clear that development by institutions is subject to the same controls as other development in the Green Belt.

C16 It is however Government policy to encourage more people to undertake higher and further education (HFE). There has been a large increase in student numbers and further increases can be expected. The lack of a reasonable alternative site outside the Green Belt (whether within the urban area or elsewhere) for the proposed expansion of an HFE establishment located in or adjacent to the Green Belt should be

taken into account in preparing or reviewing a development plan. Green Belt boundaries should be altered only in exceptional circumstances, after consideration of development opportunities within urban areas. Local planning authorities will wish to take an early opportunity to consult HFE establishments in or adjacent to the Green Belt about their development intentions. Plan preparation procedures provide opportunities for full public consultation on proposals to alter boundaries. Guidance on the timing of plan reviews is given in PPG12.

C17 Meanwhile, pending the next local plan or UDP review, the infilling or (partial or complete) redevelopment of HFE establishments on major sites in the Green Belt, which are not identified in development plans but otherwise meet the criteria in paragraph C3 or C4 of this Annex, is not inappropriate development. HFE establishments means: universities, colleges, schools and institutes of higher education; and establishments funded by the Further Education Funding Council for England, including colleges of further education, VI form colleges, and agricultural and horticultural colleges.

## ANNEX D: RE-USE OF BUILDINGS – ADDITIONAL ADVICE

### *Agricultural buildings*

D1 It is important to discourage abuse of permitted development rights. Local planning authorities should examine particularly carefully applications for re-use made within four years of the substantial completion of agricultural buildings erected under the General Development Order. This should alert them to the possibility that, when it was substantially completed, the building was in breach of planning control because there was no genuine agricultural justification.

D2 When granting permission for the use of agricultural buildings for non-agricultural purposes, local planning authorities should consider whether proliferation of farm buildings constructed under permitted development rights could have a seriously detrimental effect on the openness of the Green Belt. If so, they should consider whether it would be reasonable to attach a condition withdrawing these rights for new farm buildings in respect of that particular agricultural unit or holding. Such a condition should be used with great care, and must fairly and reasonably relate to the proposed development. While a restriction on additions to a particular group of farm buildings without specific permission might be reasonable, a restriction which sought to cover the whole of a large holding in connection with the re-use of a single building might well be unreasonable. Authorities should, where appropriate, include in their local plans a policy indicating the factors that they would take into account. If permitted development rights have been withdrawn, very special circumstances would need to be established for a new agricultural building to be permitted.

### *Residential conversions*

D3 The following advice from PPG7, *The Countryside and the Rural Economy* (January 1992), is relevant to the re-use of buildings in Green Belts for residential purposes.

“In some villages, the pressure to convert existing buildings to dwellings is great, and applications for a change of use may, if granted, lead to adverse effects on the local rural economy. The need to accommodate local commerce and industry may well be a material consideration in deciding such applications”. (Paragraph 2.13).

“Local planning authorities should examine applications for changes to residential use with particular care. The advice in paragraph D4 [of PPG7] is often particularly relevant to such proposals. New housing in the open countryside is subject to strict control (see paragraph 2.18 [of PPG7]); it may be appropriate to apply similar principles to proposals for the conversion of existing rural buildings to dwellings, especially

where such buildings are unsuitable for conversion without extensive alteration, rebuilding and/or extension. Residential conversions can often have detrimental effects on the fabric and character of historic farm buildings. While new uses can frequently be the key to the preservation of historic buildings, it is important to ensure that the new use is sympathetic to the rural character. In addition, the creation of a residential curtilage around a newly converted building can sometimes have a harmful effect on the character of the countryside, especially in areas of high quality landscape, including National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty”. (Paragraph D5).

“Residential conversions have a minimal impact on the rural economy. However conversions for holiday use can contribute more, and may reduce pressure to use other houses in the area for holiday use. Separate considerations apply to agricultural dwellings (see Annex E [of PPG7])”. (Paragraph D6).

### *Listed buildings*

D4 If a building is listed, listed building consent may be needed for its conversion as well as planning permission (see PPG15).

## ANNEX E: FURTHER GUIDANCE FROM OTHER PPGS AND CIRCULARS

Other PPGs and Circulars provide further guidance on Green Belt aspects of some specific types of development. Relevant passages are reproduced below.

*Affordable Housing (from Annex A of PPG3, March 1992).*

"11 This guidance does not alter the general presumption against inappropriate development in the Green Belts. Green Belt policy remains as set out in Planning Policy Guidance note 2.

"12 Most Green Belt areas are by their nature close to the main conurbations, and conditions are not typical of the generality of rural areas to which this policy is addressed. Special considerations may, however, arise in some of the more extensive areas of Green Belt away from the urban fringe, particularly in areas where there are many small settlements and it may not be practicable or appropriate to define Green Belt boundaries around each one.

"13 In some of these areas local planning policies already recognise that very limited development within existing settlements may be acceptable and consistent with the function of the Green Belt. It is for local planning authorities to judge whether low cost housing development for local community needs would fall within the scope of such policies.

"14 The release, exceptionally, for small-scale, low cost housing schemes of other sites within existing settlements, which would not normally be considered for development under such policies, would again be a matter for the judgement of the planning authority, having regard to all material considerations, including the objectives of Green Belt policy and the evidence of local need."

*Motorway Service Areas (from Annex A of PPG13, March 1994).*

"13 In Green Belts, there is a general presumption against inappropriate development. In line with PPG2, approval should not be given for an MSA within a Green Belt except in very special circumstances. One of the material considerations which could justify such an exception could be the lack of any signed MSAs. The greater the interval between the proposed site and any existing facility the more weight should be placed on the needs of motorway users. Developers should bear in mind the sensitive nature of Green Belt sites and avoid them where possible. Where no alternatives are readily available, developers will be expected to take great care to mitigate the likely impact of the development."

*All-seater Football League Stadia (from PPG17, September 1991).*

"50 Because of the size of the structures involved, major football stadia cannot be regarded as appropriate development within an approved Green Belt. As PPG2 makes clear, very special circumstances would be needed to justify setting aside the general presumption against inappropriate development in the Green Belts. It would be most unusual for a stadium proposal to meet those very special circumstances unless all other practicable options for location had been exhausted and other considerations had been fully addressed. A site for development as large as a major football stadium should normally be identified in a local plan. It could be considered alongside any proposal for the adjustment of Green Belt boundaries. Such boundaries should be altered only in exceptional circumstances, after consideration of development opportunities within urban areas. The procedures for making and reviewing local plans provide opportunities for full public consultation on proposals to alter boundaries."

*Gypsy Sites (from paragraph 3 of DOE Circular 1/94).*

"As a rule it will not be appropriate to make provision for gypsy sites in areas of open land where development is severely restricted, for example, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, and other protected areas. Gypsy sites are not regarded as being among those uses of land which are normally appropriate in Green Belts. Green Belt land should not therefore be allocated for gypsy sites in development plans."

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## Strategic gap and green wedge policies in structure plans: main report

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## Summary

The research comprises a systematic analysis of a sample of restraint policies playing a similar role to Green Belts, as determined at structure plan level. The report discusses the purpose and use of strategic gaps, green wedges and rural buffers and makes suggestion for clarification of their role in planning guidance.

## Order

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## Executive Summary

### Introduction

1. Local designations such as strategic gaps, rural buffers and green wedges were first referred to in planning guidance in PPG7 *The Countryside* (Revised) in 1997. The guidance states that in reviewing development plans local authorities should re-assess the function and justification of such policies, at the same time recognising that they can contribute to urban form and the shaping of urban areas. The House of Commons Environment Select Committee report on *Housing* recommended that the Government should support local planning authorities who wish to maintain their own local designations. In its response the Government stated its willingness to consider whether local designations which perform the same function as green belts and have the same objectives and purposes, should formally enjoy the same status.

2. The aims of the study were to:

- assess how far local authorities are using local designations such as strategic gaps, rural buffers and green wedges in their development plans, the scale and extent of these areas, and their location relative to urban areas;
- assess the justifications for including land in such designations;
- establish the objectives for land use within such areas, and to what extent these fulfil current green Belt purposes as set out in PPG2;
- establish what procedures exist for the definition and alteration of the boundaries of such designates areas; and
- establish what development control policies operate within such areas, and review any published development control evidence.

3. The analysis involved interviews with nine County planning authorities, selected from a wider list of authorities believed to be operating strategic gap and green wedge policies and available to the project team. A *Preliminary Survey* was produced by the Planning Policies Research Group at Oxford Brookes University in May 1999, based on correspondence and telephone survey methods.

### Scale and Extent of Strategic Gap and Green Wedge Policies

4. The survey of structure plan authorities, carried out by Oxford Brookes, in early 1999, revealed that 17 Counties had some form of strategic gap, green wedge or similar policy giving higher levels of protection than normal countryside policy. The more detailed analysis of Plans in the nine areas suggests that strategic gaps and green wedge policies have the following attributes:

- they are smaller in extent than most Green Belts, most often covering under five per cent

of a county area;

- they tend to be in the south and south east of the country, the largest areas being just beyond the outer edge of the Metropolitan Green Belt, in areas such as Crawley-Gatwick-Horsham and the Medway Towns;
- in seven of the nine cases County Councils had sought Green Belt as a first option, but had been rejected by the Secretary of State;
- decisions by the Secretary of State have sought to clearly differentiate between strategic gap and green wedge policies and Green Belt policy;
- where attempts have been made to re-formulate strategic gaps into continuous belts around towns, as in the Hampshire Structure Plan, these have been resisted by Examination in Public panels; and
- district and county councils have given strong support to strategic gap and green wedge policies, often seeking to extend them, and to adopt stronger development control policies within them.

#### *Strategic Gap and Green Wedge Purposes*

5. Each strategic restraint designation has a different basic rationale, and a number overlap to some extent with Green belt purposes. Also there are links to the positive management and enhancement of the environment of the urban fringe covered by such designation.

6. The basic purposes of the designations are as follows:

- for *strategic gaps*; they are to protect the setting and separate identity of settlements, and to avoid coalescence; retain the existing settlement pattern by maintaining the openness of the land; and retain the physical and psychological benefits of having open land near to where people live;
- for *rural buffers*; to avoid coalescence with settlements (including villages) near a town until the long-term direction of growth is decided; and
- for *green wedges*; to protect strategic open land helping to shape urban growth as it progresses; to preserve and enhance links between urban areas and the countryside; and to facilitate the positive management of land.

#### *Overlap with Green Belt Purposes*

7. The main overlap between strategic gap and green wedge and Green Belt purposes is in the area of preventing the coalescence of settlements. Most of the strategic gap and green wedge policies also have the purpose of avoiding coalescence between large built-up areas and villages. This purpose does not however overlap with those of Green Belts. Strategic gap and green wedge policies do not have the purposes of assisting urban regeneration or checking unrestricted sprawl. The restraint policies for Norwich and Lincoln have the purpose of

protecting the historic settings of the two cities. But the areas covered by the policy relate to the quality of the natural resources (for example landscape and wildlife areas) and not just the position of the land. The protection of important open land, in the form of green wedges, is an aim common to four of the counties studied. This does not overlap with Green Belt purposes.

#### *Strategic-Local Distinction*

8. There was some confusion over the status of the three types of designation in Regional Planning Guidance (RPG). The Swindon Rural Buffer is mentioned in RPG, but green wedges in Leicestershire are not. The question of how far the three types of designation can restrain regionally-derived patterns of growth, an issue which has arisen in the South East Region, has yet to be clarified.

#### *Positive Urban Fringe Policies*

9. All of the Counties studied had pursued positive measures to improve the environment of their urban fringe areas, and such initiatives were often keyed to the particular designations studied. These included strategic gap management frameworks, countryside management projects and river corridor enhancement studies. There was general acceptance of the view that environmental improvement measures were a necessary complement to restraint.

#### *Permanence and the Definition of Boundaries*

10. There is no national guidance on the permanence of strategic gaps and green wedges in structure plans. In some Counties the position is clear, but confusion has arisen especially in Counties where the policy has been widely deployed. The main findings in respect of permanence and the drawing of boundaries are that:

- strategic gaps in Hampshire, West Sussex and Kent have the same duration as other policies in the Structure Plan, they are not long term as defined for Green Belt policy in PPG2;
- the rural buffers and green wedges studied also had the same duration as the relevant structure plan;
- in the cases of Hampshire and West Sussex local opinion would prefer to regard strategic gaps as having the same level of permanence as Green Belts;
- in defining strategic gaps and other restraint designations it is important to include only land that is strictly necessary to fulfil the purposes of the policy;
- factors such as openness, topography, the nature of urban edges and vegetation should be taken into account in defining strategic gaps; and
- clearly identifiable and logical features on the ground should be used to produce defensible boundaries.

#### *Development Control Principles and Practice*

### *The Way Forward*

14. From the central Government point of view there are problems with how far such policies are needed and what form they might take. There is no agreement on what a strategic gap or rural buffer zone is, and PPG7 is not enlightening on this aspect. In terms of the future:

- *strategic gaps*, in that they deliver important outcomes, and are strictly limited in size, could be a useful feature of planning at County level. It should be made clear that land within them could be considered on an equal basis with non-designated land when Structure Plans are reviewed;
- *rural buffers*, in that they are an interim policy for towns which are exceptionally fast growing, are probably only likely to be used sparingly; but
- there is a potential for *green wedges*, delivering a wide variety of desirable outcomes, to become a successful future model for the urban fringe.

### *Removal from Structure Plans*

15. It appears that the removal of these forms of designation from Structure Plans is not feasible given their level of local public support. Central Government would need to give very strong additional re-assurances to local authorities if reliance were to be placed on normal countryside policies alone.

### *Green Belt Status*

16. There would be significant problems in giving strategic gaps and green wedges the status of Green Belts. Strategic gaps as Green Belts would reduce peripheral land development options on the edges of large settlements, often in sustainable locations. Problems over the interpretation of permanence, and the possible need for safeguarded land would also occur. If *green wedges* were given Green Belt status then the area covered by a strong presumption against development would be more closely drawn into cities and large towns. It would therefore be important to retain parts of urban peripheries free of the policy, as demonstrated in the Leicestershire and Norwich examples.

### *New Restraint Policies*

17. In this scenario structure plans and UDP Part I plans would be permitted to designate rural buffers, strategic gaps, or green wedge policies. For rural buffers and strategic gaps the emphasis would be on avoiding coalescence and retaining the separate identity of settlements. Rural buffers (more extensive than strategic gaps) could be appropriate in areas with rapid physical growth, with strategic gaps being used in more limited areas where coalescence was likely. Rural buffers and strategic gaps would help tackle issues of the orderly development of urban areas. Green wedges would follow the Leicestershire model, identifying areas of land that would help shape the form and direction of development. They would have a theme of linking town and country, and protecting high quality landscapes and access to the countryside for leisure.

### *Implications for Green Belt Policy*

**18.** A clear impression from the study was how far local planners operating strategic gap, rural buffer and green wedge policies considered them an improvement on Green Belt. They were capable of delivering wider objectives, while giving more flexibility to respond to newly-emphasised priorities of sustainable development. This brings forward the question of how far the existing purposes and long-term rigidities of Green Belt policy are appropriate in current circumstances.

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## 1. Aims And Policy Background

### *Aims of the Study*

1.1 Local planning authorities have, for many years, operated a range of policies designed to restrain development. In addition to Green Belt policy, local planning authorities have used policies, approved in structure plans, to protect strategic gaps, green wedges and rural buffers. The aims of this study are to:

- assess how far local authorities are using local designations such as strategic gaps, green wedges and rural buffers in their development plans; the scale and extent of these areas; and their location relative to urban areas;
- assess the justifications for including land in such designations;
- establish the objectives for land use within such areas; and to what extent these fulfil current Green Belt policy purposes as set out in PPG2;
- establish what procedures exist for the definition and alteration of the boundaries of such designated areas; and
- establish what development control policies operate within such areas, and review any published development control evidence.

### *Policy Background*

1.2 Strategic gaps and green wedges were first referred to in policy guidance in PPG7 *The Countryside* in 1997 ([see endnote 1](#)). It was made clear that strategic gaps and green wedges are local countryside designations which perform a lesser degree of restraint than Green Belts. They should only be maintained or extended where there is good reason to believe that normal planning policies cannot provide the necessary protection. The guidance on PPG7 emphasises that local authorities should rigorously consider the function and justification of existing local designations. It states strategic gaps and green wedges should be soundly based on a formal assessment of their contribution to urban form and urban areas ([see endnote 2](#)).

1.3 In its inquiry into *Housing* in 1998, the House of Commons Environment Committee received evidence on strategic gaps and green wedges. They concluded that Government should support local authorities who wish to maintain their own designations which play a similar role to Green Belts such as Rural Buffer Zones and Strategic Gaps ([see endnote 3](#)). In its response, published in October 1998, the Government stated:

Following its Planning Comprehensive Spending Review, the Government is giving careful consideration to the role of local planning designations. The Government is willing to consider whether local designations which perform the same function as Green Belts, and have the same objectives and purposes, should formally enjoy the same status. In the meantime, it remains the Government's view that local designations, such as Rural Buffer Zones and Strategic Gaps, carry less weight

than sites formally designated in accordance with PPG2, and the policies operating within them should therefore not be as restrictive as provided for in PPG2 ([see endnote 4](#)).

1.4 In recent draft advice on Regional Planning Guidance the Government has re-affirmed the regional and sub-regional role of Green Belt policy, but makes no reference to strategic gap and green wedge policies ([see endnote 5](#)). Guidance on development plans suggests that structure plans can indicate broad areas of restraint on development and these can form part of the strategic framework for local plans and development control. This guidance includes Green Belts as a subject for inclusion in structure plans but, again, does not refer to strategic gaps or green wedges ([see endnote 6](#)).

#### *Evidence from Previous Research*

1.5 Research for the Rural Development Commission on *Rural Development and Land Use Planning Policies* revealed 29 strategic gap and green wedge policies in a sample of 30 rural area local plans from across the country. The number of such policies is believed to have grown over recent years. It was noted that these policies adopt parts, or all, of the rationale for Green Belts proper, and also use similarly restrictive provisions for development control. A number of the policies found sought to protect the setting of historic towns or cities such as Salisbury, deploying Green Belt-style development controls to this end ([see endnote 7](#)). The planners interviewed considered strategic gap and green wedge policies to be as restrictive as Green Belts, but thought this necessary to help shape development and define the edges of large towns and historic cities ([see endnote 8](#)).

1.6 A *Preliminary Survey of Structure Plan Authorities*, carried out in 1999 by the Planning Policies Research group at Oxford Brookes University, revealed that 17 Counties had some form of strategic gap, green wedge or similar policy in their structure plans. These were intended to give higher levels of protection than normal countryside policy (see Table 1.1). In some cases, such as Hampshire and West Sussex, the policies were long standing and indicated on structure plan key diagrams, but in others written statements in the plan were not accompanied by indication of the broad areas where they would apply ([see endnote 9](#)).

**Table 1.1:** Counties with Strategic Restraint Policies, including Strategic Gaps and Green Wedges, in Structure Plans:

Bedfordshire	Norfolk
Berkshire	Nottinghamshire
Cornwall	Staffordshire
Cumbria	Suffolk
Gloucestershire	Surrey
Hampshire	Warwickshire
Kent	West Sussex
Leicestershire	Wiltshire
Lincolnshire	

Source: Steenberg, C. (1999) *Preliminary Survey of Structure Plan Authorities*, Oxford Brookes University

1.7 There is a growing volume of opinion to suggest that Green Belt policies, conceived as permanent restrictions on development over broad areas around cities, may not accord well with sustainable development priorities (see endnote 10). The Draft PPG3 *Housing* suggests that planned extensions to existing urban areas are likely to prove the next sustainable option for new housing after building on appropriate sites within the urban areas (see endnote 11). The presence of Green Belt may preclude the identification of the most sustainable sites, in particular those with good access to a variety of transport modes. In this situation green wedges have been suggested as a better way forward. The recent *Strategic Sustainability Appraisal of the Nottingham-Derby Green Belt* discusses the relevance of green wedges to regional planning. They are seen as having considerable potential in that they stress the roles of strategic restraint policies in structuring urban growth, rather than the preventative role of policy (see endnote 12). When discussion about introducing Green Belts into Wales arose in the early 1990s, much of the advice received stressed that the policy should take the form of wedges, structuring development, rather than broad encircling areas of land operating as stoppers or diverters of development (see endnote 13). These themes are reflected in more recent discussion in the context of allowing for economic development in Wales (see endnote 14).

1.8 It is therefore important, given the emerging sustainability agenda, to assess the benefits of forms of restraint other than Green Belt, which operate in a strategic context. This study is designed to produce a body of evidence of their use at local authority level from which to draw conclusions.

#### Endnotes

1. This phrase, used throughout the study, is also intended to cover also rural buffer zone policies.
2. DOE (1997) *The Countryside: Environmental Quality and Economic and Social Development*, PPG 7, London, HMSO, para. 4.16
3. HM Government (1998) *Housing*, Tenth Report of Environment, Transport and Regional Affairs Committee, Vol. 1, 495-1, para.264
4. HM Government (1998) *The Government's Response to the Environment, Transport and Regional Affairs Committee, Housing*, Cm 4080, para. 95.
5. DETR (1999) Revision of Planning Policy Guidance Note 11; *Regional Planning*, Public Consultation Draft, London, DETR.
6. DETR (1999) PPG 12; *Development Plans*, London, DETR, paras 3.8 and 3.10.
7. Elson, M.J., Steenberg, C. and L. Downing (1998) *Rural Development and Land Use Planning Policies*, Salisbury, RDC, paras 5.15-5.16.
8. *Ibid.*, para. 5.25.
9. Steenberg, C. (1999) *Strategic Gap And Green Wedge Policies In Structure Plans, Preliminary Findings of a Survey of Structure Plan Authorities*. Unpublished Report, Planning Policies Research Group, Oxford Brookes University.
10. See, for example, Elson, M.J. Green Belts the Need for Re-Appraisal, *Town & Country Planning*, 68,5 156-8.
11. DETR (1999) Public Consultation Draft, PPG3 *Housing*, London, DETR.
12. Baker Associates (1999) *Strategic Sustainability Assessment of the Nottingham-Derby Green Belt in the East Midlands Region*, Bristol, Baker Associates, paras 4.25-4.30.
13. See, for example, Elson, M. J. (1992) Green Belts for Wales, *The Planner*, 78,9, pp10-11.
14. Tewdwr-Jones, M (1997) Green Belts or Green Wedges for Wales? A Flexible Approach to

Planning in the Urban Periphery, *Regional Studies*, 31, 1, pp73-77.

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## 2. Strategic Gap And Green Wedge Policies The Current Position

### Introduction

2.1 Strategic policies for the restraint of development outside towns and cities, currently take a variety of forms. Normal countryside policies, following PPG7 *The Countryside*, suggest that development will be firmly controlled, and any change limited to that for agriculture, forestry and related activities ([see endnote 1](#)). Where an additional layer of protection against unnecessary development is needed, restraint has taken one of three forms:

- the designation of Green Belts, operating in accord with the principles in PPG2;
- strategic gap and green wedge policies, put forward by strategic authorities and, from time to time, approved by DETR; and
- AONB and local landscape designations, the former determined by the Countryside Agency, and the latter by local planning authorities, which elevate the importance of landscape conservation in any decisions made.

This chapter assesses the second of these three categories strategic gaps and green wedges.

2.2 The *Preliminary Survey* was limited to an assessment of policies in structure plans. The majority of these are in the southern part of England. No Metropolitan District or Unitary Development Plan policies were studied as it was established that most such areas already operated Green Belt policy restraints ([see endnote 2](#)). The nine examples studies here, selected from the seventeen identified in the *Preliminary Survey*, take two basic forms:

- county-wide patterns of strategic gaps or green wedges; and
- strategic restraint policies related to one town, city or group of settlements in a county ([see endnote 3](#)).

The relevant Counties in the first category are West Sussex, Hampshire and Leicestershire. In the second, the Counties are Kent, Wiltshire, Norfolk, Lincolnshire, Suffolk and Gloucestershire. In each case the account discusses the number and extent of strategic gaps and green wedges, their purposes, and any key Examination in Public (EIP) rulings which have affected the status of such policies. Comments are also made on the level of support for such policies given by relevant District Councils.

### County-Wide Approaches

#### West Sussex

2.3 The approved West Sussex Structure Plan (1993) shows 21 strategic gaps on its key diagram. They cover some 20,285 hectares, just under 10 per cent of the County area. The

strategic gaps are in three broad areas. They were first introduced in 1966 on the coast, and they have been retained in subsequent structure plans. The main coastal gaps separate Chichester, Bognor Regis, Selsey, Littlehampton, Worthing, Lancing and Shoreham. The 1980 Structure Plan introduced large strategic gaps separating Horsham, Crawley and East Grinstead, bordering the Metropolitan Green Belt and the Surrey County boundary in the vicinity of Gatwick Airport. Strategic Gaps also separate Haywards Heath, Burgess Hill and Hassocks, located in the London-Brighton corridor (see [Figure 2.1](#)).

2.4 There has been a gradual growth in the number of strategic gaps in the County, from 16 in the 1980 Structure Plan, to 22 proposed in the 1996 Third Review Structure Plan. There are also 17 local gaps listed in the 1996 Plan.

2.5 The purposes of the strategic gaps are to prevent the coalescence of settlements, to retain amenity and the separate identity of settlements, and to protect the undeveloped coastline. The County Council see strategic gaps as protecting the settings of towns and the existing settlement structure of the County. In the West Sussex *Environmental Capacity Study*, carried out in 1996, strategic gaps are seen as part of countryside capital which should be conserved through planning. The gaps are acknowledged to be a County counterpart to the Metropolitan Green Belt, the latter operating in a Regional context (see [endnote 4](#)). Successive Structure Plan approvals by the Secretary of State have stressed that the boundaries of strategic gaps and built-up areas should not necessarily be co-incidental, and that the purpose of the gaps is to prevent coalescence, not to impose a presumption against development. The EIP Panel commented on the Third Review of the Structure Plan (1997) that strategic gap policies should allow for development in gaps which may become necessary when all other options have been exhausted (see [endnote 5](#)). In this way they were seeking to make a clear distinction between strategic gap policies and Green Belt policy.

**Figure 2.1:** Strategic Gaps in the Crawley - Haywards Heath area of West Sussex

2.6 Strategic gaps have a high level of local political support in West Sussex. They are seen as one of a number of key milestones for County policy, and one to which considerable attention is given in monitoring. District Councils strongly support the policy, and have added local gaps in their local plans. The result is that some towns are surrounded by a patchwork of strategic gaps and local gaps, forming a continuous belt (for example around Horsham).

### *Hampshire*

2.7 The 1994 Hampshire Structure Plan identifies some 45 strategic gaps in the County. These comprise 13,700 hectares, 3.6 per cent of the area of the County. The gaps are clustered in two areas; along the coast separating Portsmouth, Southampton and Fareham; and in North East Hampshire separating towns in the Blackwater Valley area (see [Figures 2.2](#) and [2.3](#)). The pattern is as inherited from the South Hampshire Structure Plan of 1990 (eight gaps), the Mid Hampshire Structure Plan of 1990 (eight gaps) and the North East Hampshire Structure Plan of 1989 (15 gaps).

2.8 In approving the 1994 Structure Plan the Secretary of State (SoS) was keen to clarify which of the proposed gaps in the plan were of clear strategic importance. Accordingly the 45 gaps were divided into two categories. The first 18 gaps identified were to cover circumstances where it was considered there was a risk of coalescence between *substantial settlements*. The

remaining 27 gaps were to be re-examined by the County at the next review of the Plan, in order to decide whether they were of strategic or local importance.

### **Figure 2.2:** Strategic Gaps in South Hampshire

2.9 Following a detailed technical study by the County the Structure Plan Review of 1996 proposed three types of strategic gap:

- three (larger) gaps, to avoid the coalescence of major urban areas in the Meon and Southampton areas, and in North East Hampshire (these formed 'collars around the relevant urban areas);
- a strategic gap in the Blackwater Valley, linking with a similar designation in Surrey; and
- seven gaps linking undeveloped coast to the open countryside beyond the South Hampshire urban areas.

If implemented, this proposal would have reduced the number of strategic gaps from 45 to 11 ([see endnote 6](#)).

2.10 However, the EIP Panel, reporting in 1997, considered the proposed South Hampshire and North East Hampshire strategic gaps to be extensive enough to be termed quasi-Green Belts, rather than having the more limited extent and purposes of strategic gaps. They made similar comments in respect of the proposed Blackwater Valley strategic gap. The Panel proposed that eight strategic gaps should be included in the Plan, in locations where a real threat of coalescence between substantial settlements could occur during the Plan period ([see endnote 7](#)).

### **Figure 2.3:** Strategic Gaps in North East Hampshire

2.11 In their latest proposed modifications (1999) the Hampshire, Portsmouth and Southampton authorities see the strategic gap issue as one of the most difficult facing the authorities. All of the gaps have strong public support, yet the authorities are aware of the need to include only gaps serving a clear strategic purpose. They have proposed, as a compromise, that four strategic gaps should be approved in:

- in the Fareham-Whiteley area of the Meon Valley;
- in the Fleet, Aldershot, Yateley area in North East Hampshire;
- in the Aldershot, Farnborough-Surrey boundary area (the Blackwater Gap), and
- between Southampton and Eastleigh ([see endnote 8](#)).

2.12 With the removal of strategic gaps around Winchester, the County have proposed a new Structure Plan policy to protect the setting of the City. This would operate in addition to normal

countryside policies.

**2.13** The Districts have been strongly in favour of strategic gap policies, and are unwilling to see any of the existing gaps lost. This has resulted in the suggested compromise of strategic and local gaps being put forward in the current Structure Plan, despite the wish of the Panel to remove reference to local gaps from the Plan. Where Districts have defined local gaps these have also, on occasion, included green wedges, green corridors and greenways. Strategic gaps have presented some dilemmas to the new Unitary Authorities in South Hampshire where large sites offering potential economic benefits have been the subject of planning applications.

#### *Leicestershire*

**2.14** Eleven green wedges, within and on the edges of Leicester, and three on the edges of Loughborough, were first approved in the 1987 Leicestershire Structure Plan. These continued established policies for protecting structurally important areas of open land which influence the form and direction of development in Leicester and Loughborough. In Leicester the green wedges penetrate the urban area, separating neighbourhoods. The wedges in the south of the City are narrower than those in the north. Around a quarter of the City boundary, on the north western edge, has a peripheral pattern of restraint separating Leicester from dormitory villages such as Groby, Anstey and Birstall ([Figure 2.4](#)).

#### **Figure 2.4:** Green Wedges in and around Leicester

**2.15** In 1994 further green wedges were approved in the Coalville and Hinckley-Earl Shilton area. Some additions were also made to the green wedges around Leicester at this time. The 2000 Deposit Structure Plan proposes no further strategic changes to the green wedges. There is also an enabling policy in the Structure Plan, allowing for local gaps to be defined by District Councils.

**2.16** The aims of the green wedges include positive environmental aspirations as well as restraint. The latter purposes are the prevention of coalescence and the protection of structurally important areas of open land; and the former relate to preserving landscape and wildlife links between town and country, providing recreational facilities and promoting positive land management ([see endnote 9](#)).

**2.17** A distinction between green wedges and Green Belt policy was made at the EIP discussions into the 1987 Deposit Structure Plan. The Panel concluded there were no special circumstances to justify a Green Belt around Leicester. They also noted that green wedges do not constitute a Green Belt in the accepted sense, in that they do not seek to restrict the total amount of development, but rather to ensure that as urban development extends, open land is incorporated within it. Green wedges are seen by the County Council as a dynamic tool for shaping urban development and improving the quality of life of residents.

**2.18** There has been no conflict with the Districts and Leicester City Council over the principle of green wedge policy. Some Districts have sought to create additional green wedges, but the County has not supported them where they feel they do not fulfil the criteria in the Structure Plan. Housebuilders have challenged green wedge policies at local plan inquiries, notably those within the Blaby Local Plan area in an economically buoyant part of the southern edge of

the City.

## Individual Settlements

### Kent

**2.19** In Kent, the County Council have created a strategic gap to separate Maidstone and the Medway Gap area from the Medway Towns of Rochester, Chatham and Gillingham and from each other. The gap, some seven and a half miles wide on an east-west axis, and an average of three to four miles wide north-south, was adapted in the 1996 Kent Structure Plan. (see [Figure 2.5](#)) (see [endnote 10](#)). The three local authorities in the gap, (Tonbridge and Malling, Maidstone and Medway), have sought to extend the gap in various ways, for example to recognise the separation between Gillingham and Chatham. The County have however resisted this on the basis that the proposal was not strategic. Most prominently the County Council objected to a proposal in the Tonbridge and Malling Deposit Draft Local Plan (1996) which sought to extend the Strategic Gap by a significant amount from the south east to the south west side of the Medway Gap settlements. Housebuilders have objected to the policy being included and extended in local plans, contending there is insufficient land for future new housing in the Maidstone area.

**2.20** The strategic gap is an anti-coalescence policy, seen as necessary due to new employment and housing pressures in this part of Kent, and the closeness of the settlements in this part of the County. Much of the strategic gap is also covered by AONB and Special Landscape Area policies.

**Figure 2.5:** Medway Towns Strategic Gap: Kent

### Wiltshire

**2.21** The relevant strategic restraint policy in Wiltshire is a *rural buffer*, which is located on the western and southern edges of Swindon, with a small area north of the Town. This policy was approved in a Structure Plan alteration in 1990. The rural buffer is approximately four miles wide west of Swindon and one mile wide to the south. Its purpose is to avoid coalescence of the fast growing urban area of Swindon with rural service centres such as Wootton Bassett and Cricklade, and a number of villages around the town.

**2.22** The EIP into the 1993 Structure Plan Alteration had considered and rejected the use of Green Belt and strategic gap policies for the area. These were seen as inappropriate when the aim of the restraint policy was to maintain the separate identity of towns and villages and to protect the open countryside around Swindon, pending decisions on the long term future of the town. This is thus a one off policy which, as the Structure Plan approval letter states creates a special presumption against development tending to lead to the coalescence of settlements.

**Figure 2.6:** The Swindon Rural Buffer

**2.23** Following the EIP into the Draft Structure Plan of 1996, Swindon Borough and Wiltshire County Councils have carried out a study into the possible direction of future growth around Swindon. Growth is proposed south of the town, setting back part of the existing rural buffer to allow for this. However local authority modifications to the Structure Plan propose extensions

of the buffer to the east of Swindon, so that it would encircle the town. This is being considered at the current EIP into the proposed amendments to the Structure Plan.

**2.24** There is strong support from North Wiltshire District for the rural buffer. The residents of village and market towns around Swindon see the policy as the main way of retaining the identity of such settlements. The largest number of representations on any topic on the Structure Plan was on the rural buffer. A local Green Belt Protection Committee appeared at the EIP in November 1999 to argue in favour of a strengthened restraint policy around Swindon.

#### *Lincolnshire*

**2.25** The cornerstone of policies to protect the historic and natural environment of the City of Lincoln is a series of green wedges approved in the 1998 Lincoln Local Plan. These safeguard the line and character of important views into and out of the City and help maintain Lincoln's character as an urban area entwined with its rural setting. The green wedges, together with Areas of Great Landscape Value north and south of the City, and a Special Protection Zone in North Kesteven defined in the adopted West Lindsey and North Kesteven Local Plan, help to prevent coalescence of Lincoln and neighbouring settlements (see [Figure 2.7](#)).

**2.26** The Deposit Draft of the Lincolnshire Structure Plan Review (1996) discussed a set of policy options for the continued protection of the unique setting and special character of Lincoln. Those considered most closely were:

- a continuation of existing countryside policies;
- the definition and management of structurally important areas of open land (termed green wedges by the County Council), and
- the designation of a Green Belt to provide long term protection for an area encircling the City.

Little additional land was required for new housing allocations within the Structure Plan period up to 2011 and there were few pressures for inappropriate development around Lincoln. The two Districts, West Lindsey and North Kesteven, in which any Green Belt or green wedges would be located, were in favour of green wedges.

#### **Figure 2.7:** Green Wedges and other protected areas in and around Lincoln

**2.27** The EIP Panel did not recommend approval of Green Belt, because existing policies were regarded as adequate to control development. No examples of a failure of the existing policy framework were cited by interests favouring Green Belt designation, and no major changes in circumstances sufficient to otherwise justify designation were established. Para 2.14 of PPG 2 suggests Green Belts are a policy which should be introduced as an exceptional measure. No exceptional circumstances were considered to be present in this case ([see endnote 12 & 13](#)).

**2.28** The Structure Plan policy for Development Around Lincoln's Urban Fringes, endorsed by

the EIP Panel, states that land should be identified to:

- protect the historic setting of the City from inappropriate development;
- protect structurally important areas of open land; and
- ensure that open areas of land extend outwards from Lincoln to preserve links with the open countryside.

**2.29** The area of land covered by the policy is not indicated on the Structure Plan key diagram. Detailed interpretation of the policy is left to the Districts who, it is suggested, may more clearly identify areas for special protection in their proposals maps. Strong District support for the policy suggests that this process is assured. Arising from an EIP Panel recommendation, work has now commenced on an Alteration to the Structure Plan for the Lincoln Policy Area. Among other matters, this will extend the green wedge concept beyond the City boundary and will involve delineation in the Key Diagram.

#### *Norfolk*

**2.30** In *Norfolk*, the County Council operates a policy to protect the environmental assets of the Norwich Policy area. The areas covered by the policy include: river valleys, areas of important landscape character, areas of woodland, and the landscape setting of the Southern Bypass of the City. The area covered is largely to the south of the City. These areas are to be identified in local plans (see [Figure 2.8](#)). The policy was approved in 1993, and has been rolled forward in the Structure Plan adopted in October 1999. The EIP Panel recommended no amendments to the policy in 1998.

**2.31** The environmental assets policy was introduced following a proposal by the County Council in 1989 for a Green Belt around Norwich. This was rejected following the EIP in 1992, and the strengthened environmental protection policy was introduced. The policy combines environmental and restraint aspects, and is justified in order to:

- protect the historic setting of Norwich;
- safeguard the surrounding countryside and its particular features and green wedges, and
- prevent settlements merging, restricting ribbon development and urban sprawl.

**2.32** The EIP Panel concluded that Green Belt policy was not appropriate in 1992 for a number of reasons;

- the rate of growth of the City was not seen as exceptional;
- there was no evidence that existing planning policies could not control development pressures; and
- plans for the long term direction of growth around Norwich had not been put forward by

the Authority.

The Secretary of State agreed with these points and turned down the proposal ([see endnote 14](#)).

#### **Figure 2.8:** Protection of Environmental Assets around Norwich

**2.33** Although the area covered by the policy is defined by a range of environmental assets such as river valleys and areas of attractive landscape development control policies in the area are the same as for Green Belts in PPG2. They were also updated to reflect the revision of the guidance in 1995.

**2.34** The policy is supported by Norwich City and South Norfolk Districts. Broadland District Council however objected to the policy at the 1998 EIP on the basis that it attempts to apply Government guidance on Green Belts to areas of environmental protection.

#### *Suffolk*

**2.35** The 1995 Structure Plan contains a special policy to protect part of the urban fringe of Ipswich. It states that in order to maintain the countryside around the City, and retain the separate identity of nearby villages, care will be taken to maintain the open character of land separating the villages of Kesgrave, Rushmere St Andrew and Foxhill (on the north eastern edge of Ipswich) from each other, and from Ipswich and Woodbridge. This succeeded a similar policy in the 1979 Suffolk Structure Plan, which also referred to named villages on the western edge of Ipswich. This special policy is not shown as an area on the key diagram of either plan.

**2.36** In the 1999 Draft Structure Plan this policy has been widened to cover urban fringe areas throughout the County ([see endnote 15](#)). Whilst development requirements will be met, the separate identity of towns and villages will be maintained by the use of strategic gaps. Where necessary strategic gaps will be identified in local plans. Waveney Borough Council have identified strategic gaps north and south of Lowestoft in their Local Plan.

#### *Gloucestershire*

**2.37** The Second Review of the Gloucestershire Structure Plan (1997) included a policy for designating a strategic gap on the southern edge of Gloucester. This was to prevent urban sprawl and the coalescence of the Gloucester urban area with villages in the locality. The proposed policy indicates that development should be opposed where it would visually or physically diminish the amount of open and undeveloped land within the strategic gap. However the EIP Panel proposed (1999) that no evidence had been produced to indicate that normal countryside policies were inadequate to protect the countryside from urban sprawl. Using advice in PPG7 *The Countryside* (para 4.16) they recommended rejection of the policy. This has been accepted by the County Council.

#### *Main Findings*

**2.38** This analysis suggests that strategic restraint policies, in the sample of structure plans

studied, have the following attributes:

- they are smaller in extent than most Green Belts, normally covering under five per cent of a county area;
- they tend to be in the south and south east of the country, the largest areas are just beyond the outer edge of the Metropolitan Green Belt, in areas such as Crawley-Gatwick-Horsham and the Medway Towns;
- in seven out of nine cases county councils had sought Green Belt as a first option but had been rejected by the Secretary of State;
- decisions by the Secretary of State have sought generally to differentiate between strategic gap and green wedge policies and Green Belt policy;
- where attempts have been made to re-formulate strategic gaps into continuous belts around towns, as in the Hampshire Structure Plan, this has been resisted; and
- districts and city councils have given strong support to strategic gap and green wedge policies; in some cases seeking their extension, and the adoption of stronger development control policies within them ([see endnote 16](#)).

#### Endnotes

1. DoE (1997) *The Countryside Environmental Quality and Economic and Social Development*, PPG7 Revised, London, HMSO.
2. A number of Metropolitan and Unitary authorities may have green wedge policies that are relevant.
3. Steenberg, C. (1999) *Strategic Gap and Green Wedge Policies in Structure Plans Preliminary Findings of Survey of Structure Plan Authorities*, Planning Policies Research Group, Oxford Brookes University, 7pp.
4. West Sussex County Council (1996) *Environmental Capacity in West Sussex*, Chichester, WSCC, para 2.13.1-2.13.6.
5. West Sussex County Council (1999) *Mind the Gap, County Milestones and Strategic Planning Monitoring Statement*, Chichester, WSCC, pp 5-6. Any development would be such as to not compromise the fundamental integrity of a gap.
6. Hampshire County Council (1996) *Hampshire County Structure Plan (Review) 1996-2011*, Winchester, HCC, pg 30, para 170.
7. Hampshire County Council (1997) *Hampshire County Structure Plan 1996-2011 (Review)*, Report of the Panel, Winchester, HCC, p 83, para 8.25.
8. Hampshire County Council (1999) *Hampshire County Structure Plan 1996-2011 (Review)*, Proposed Modifications, p 96, para 265.
9. Leicestershire County Council (2000) *Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Structure Plan 1996-2016*, Deposit Draft, paras 2.50-2.51.
10. Kent County Council (1996) *Kent Structure Plan 1996*, Maidstone, KCC, para 3.106, policy MK5.
11. Wiltshire County Council and Swindon Borough Council (1998) *Wiltshire Structure Plan 2011: Swindon Development Appraisal Study*, Swindon, WCC and SBC.
12. Lincolnshire County Council (1996) *Lincolnshire Structure Plan*, Lincoln, LCC, p107.

13. Lincolnshire County Council (1999) *Lincolnshire Structure Plan, EIP Panel Report*, Lincoln, LCC, paras 4.1-4.14.
14. Department of the Environment and Transport (1993) *Norfolk Structure Plan: Norwich Area Alterations*, paras 3.1-3.11.
15. Suffolk County Council (1999) *Suffolk County Structure Plan Review*, Deposit Draft, Ipswich, Suffolk, para 5.13.
16. Gloucestershire County Council (1997) *Gloucestershire Structure Plan: Second Review, Deposit Draft*, Gloucester, GCC, policy SG1.

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### 3. The Purposes Of Strategic Gap And Green Wedge Policies

#### *Introduction*

3.1 This chapter assesses the purposes of local restraint policy designations in terms of:

- the basic reasons why strategic gap and green wedge policies have been introduced into policy;
- how far the expressed purposes of strategic gaps and green wedges overlap with PPG2 purposes;
- the extent of links to positive measures to enhance and manage the environment of the urban fringe.

3.2 The nine case study examples fall into three categories. Whilst there is some overlap, the three basic categories are as follows:

- strategic gaps; Hampshire; West Sussex and Kent;
- rural buffers; Wiltshire, Suffolk and Gloucestershire; and
- green wedges; Leicestershire, Norfolk and Lincolnshire.

The situations where strategic gaps, green wedges and rural buffers have been considered appropriate vary considerably. They will therefore be treated in turn.

#### **Basic Rationales**

##### *Strategic Gaps*

3.3 Strategic gaps have been most comprehensively used in West Sussex and Hampshire. In both Counties they have a lengthy pedigree and a high level of local political support. The essence of this support appears to reside in three basic arguments. These are:

- the need to protect the setting and separate identity of settlements, by avoiding their coalescence;
- the need to retain the openness of the land by resisting greenfield growth, and thus conserving the existing character of an area in terms of its current mix of urban and rural development; and
- the need to provide real access and recreational benefits to urban dwellers, and the perceived (psychological) as well as real benefits of having open countryside near to where people live.

**3.4** The retention of the separate identity of individual settlements is extremely important to people living in the urban fringe and in urban areas. Successful strategic gap policies can help safeguard local distinctiveness. A recent MORI poll conducted in West Sussex found strategic gaps to be one of the most popular features of the County's planning policy. Successive structure plans in West Sussex have used the same preamble to explain the basic reasons for strategic gap policy:

the settings of towns and villages are as important as the buildings and spaces which comprise their urban environment and, if the individual character of a place is to be retained, its setting must be given close attention. A clear visual break when passing from place to place gives a recognisable structure to a group of settlements, establishing in the travellers mind that they are arriving to somewhere else ([see endnote 1](#))

Separate identity is seen to be enhanced if there is an absence of urban activity within a defined strategic gap. Development and road traffic movement are seen as reducing the perception of a gap. For these reasons very strong development control policies in such areas are seen as desirable.

**3.5** The second rationale suggests that retaining openness through the use of strategic gaps can effectively retain the coherence of the settlement structure, (as argued in Hampshire), and the valued ambience created by the existing urban and rural structure, (as argued in West Sussex). In Hampshire, strategic gaps are seen as most important in areas of the County where the relationship between urban settlements, and the open or largely undeveloped countryside between them, is under such pressure that the coherence of the settlement structure is in danger of being lost. This may be where large urban areas are tending to coalesce, or where there is a danger of urban sprawl. Hampshire County Council argue as follows:

the balance between the built-up areas and the open or largely undeveloped areas around and between them is important. This relates to the danger of coalescence and the need for identifying and protecting the gaps between the settlements involved ([see endnote 2](#)).

**3.6** In West Sussex, the argument is made that the openness of a strategic gap is itself an environmental resource. As the study *Environmental Capacity in West Sussex* argues:

both urban open spaces and strategic gaps have boundaries which are artificial, and are usually defined in part or wholly by surrounding urban development. Yet, no one would think of arguing that urban greenspace was not an environmental resource. The message is simple: the openness of the land is the essence of its value as a resource ([see endnote 3](#)).

Losing strategic gaps, it is argued, would mean an end to the existing urban structure of West Sussex ([see endnote 4](#)). The County Council describe the image which it is considered important to retain as one of medium-sized and small towns and villages, set in good quality

English lowland between Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

**3.7** The third argument covers the benefits for sustainable development and the psychological attributes of strategic gaps. Protecting undeveloped land close to where people live, it is argued, retains the opportunity for local people to find the recreational, scenic or amenity resources they require without having to travel long distances. In addition, Hampshire County Council suggest that having undeveloped land and countryside near residential areas confers psychological benefits which contribute to general quality for life and well-being of local residents just by being there ([see endnote 5](#)).

#### *Rural Buffers*

**3.8** Strategic gaps tend to be limited in extent, most often comprising narrow strips of land designed to avoid coalescence and retain the existing settlement pattern. Where restraint is seen as necessary over a wider geographical area, the policy can take the form of a rural buffer, as in the area around Swindon, Wiltshire or around part of Ipswich in Suffolk. The choice between rural buffer and strategic gap policies was appraised in the recent *Swindon Development Appraisal Study* of 1998. In Swindon's case the need was for a policy to avoid the coalescence of the town with around a dozen small towns and villages within three or four miles of the urban area. To give certainty to the year 2011 it was felt that all settlements around Swindon should be accorded equal protection ([see endnote 6](#)). Strategic gaps were rejected because they are normally used to separate *substantial* urban areas only. The policy for restraint north and east of Ipswich also has similar purposes to the Swindon policy, and could also be termed a rural buffer (paras 2.35-2.36).

#### *Green Wedges*

**3.9** The emphasis in the most prominent example here (Leicestershire) is on protecting structurally important areas of open land as development extends. Thus green wedges help shape urban growth. This approach is argued as more sustainable in that it retains the peripheral development option for future housing. This is particularly important given the formalisation of the sequential approach proposed in the draft PPG3 *Housing* ([see endnote 7](#)).

**3.10** Three other arguments have been put forward to support green wedge policies in the Leicestershire case;

- (unlike strategic gaps) they penetrate urban areas, and help preserve and promote landscape and wildlife corridors between the countryside and urban areas;
- they provide space for appropriate recreational facilities within easy reach of urban residents, at the same time reducing potential journey times to such facilities which might otherwise be located in less accessible locations; and
- they facilitate the positive management of land so that the wedges are enhanced as an important contributor to the quality of life of nearby urban residents.

The creation of green networks linking urban open space and the countryside, and the

retention and enhancement of access to nearby open land, are key themes of the policy.

**3.11** The City of Norwich is a free-standing cathedral City in a rural setting with a large medieval core. The quality of the City and the environment it provides are significantly enhanced by its natural setting and, in particular, a number of river valleys crossing the area. The construction of a new Southern By-Pass in the early 1990s focused pressures on the particularly attractive southern approaches to the City.

**3.12** In order to protect these attributes restraint policy around Norwich is based on identifying an area co-incident with high quality environmental assets. The main assets identified are river valleys, areas of important landscape or nature conservation character, areas of woodland which help define a clear edge to the built up area, and other areas contributing to the landscape setting of the City ([see endnote 8](#)). In addition, open land which acts as green wedges within the built-up area of the City is included. A *Green Plan for Norwich*, first published in 1986, put forward policies to protect river corridors and wooded ridges within the built up area, as well as to improve access to major open areas by the creation of a Green Links network. These ideas were subsequently incorporated in local plans for the Norwich area ([see endnote 9](#)).

**3.13** The green wedges policy around Lincoln is modelled on that for Norwich. The basic purpose of the green wedges is to manage structurally important open land areas in and around Lincoln, and prevent inappropriate development that would affect the historic setting of Lincoln. In their appraisal of the policy the County Council saw green wedges as retaining the possibility for some future development in appropriate locations on the edge of the City. At the same time as allowing appropriate development, green wedges incorporated into the growing urban area could be maintained, enabling optimum use of transport infrastructure. It was argued that green wedges would not have some of the adverse consequences of Green Belts such as:

- additional pressures in urban green space and open space; and
- the deflection of development beyond a fixed area of restraint to less sustainable locations ([see endnote 10](#)).

Accordingly the Lincoln, West Lindsey and North Kesteven Local Plans identify green wedges, Areas of Great Landscape Value and the Skellingthorpe Protection Zone on the northern and southern fringes of the City, where the additional policy of restraint would apply.

#### *Green Belt and Other Strategic Restraint Policy Purposes*

**3.14** An analysis of how far strategic gap and green wedge policies overlap with Green Belt policy has been conducted. The purposes are categorised according to those listed in the relevant structure plan policies. The results are shown in [Table 3.1](#). There are five main points to be made here.

**3.15** Firstly, the main overlap in purposes between strategic gap and green wedges and Green Belt is in the area of preventing the coalescence of settlements. In Hampshire, Kent and West Sussex the strategic gap policies act to separate substantial settlements. In this respect they

are the same as Green Belts which can be designated, as stated in PPG2, to prevent *towns* from merging. There is thus no difference *in terms of functions* between for example Green Belts separating settlements in the Fylde, Lancashire or Swadlincote and Burton-on-Trent and many of the strategic gaps in Hampshire and West Sussex.

**3.16** Secondly, virtually all of the strategic gap and green wedge policies also have the purpose of avoiding coalescence between large built-up areas and nearby villages. Avoiding coalescence with villages is not, however, a purpose which overlaps with those of Green Belts. Where proposals for Green Belts to perform this purpose have been suggested in the past they have been turned down by Government. In some of the larger strategic gaps in West Sussex, avoiding coalescence *between villages* is also a purpose of the policy, and similar reasoning occurs in the cases of the Swindon rural buffer and the restraint area near Ipswich. This is also not a purpose of Green Belt policy.

**Table 3.1:** Comparison of Green Belt and Other Strategic Restraint Policy Purposes

**3.17** Thirdly, the strategic gap and green wedge policies found do not have the purposes of assisting urban regeneration or checking unrestricted sprawl. Also wording relating to safeguarding the countryside was only included in the proposal for the Gloucester strategic gap, a policy which was not accepted by the Government Office for the South West.

**3.18** Fourthly, two of the restraint policies, those for Norwich and Lincoln, have the purpose of protecting the setting and historic character of the two cities. In this sense *the purpose* does overlap with that for Green Belts. However, beyond that, the policies differ radically from Green Belts in terms of their use of green wedges penetrating into cities, and the definition of the restraint area based on the intrinsic value of local environmental assets, not merely on the position of the land in respect to urban areas.

**3.19** Fifthly, the protection of important open land, usually in the form of green wedges, is an aim common to four of the counties studied. This encompassed the protection of land to retain important views into and out of cities, and of open land providing links between urban areas and the countryside. This purpose does not overlap with Green Belt purposes.

*The Strategic Local Distinction*

**3.20** Green Belts are a nationally-accepted policy designation, with the same criteria being applied to their definition, use and re-adjustment across the country. The justification, form and general location of Green Belts is a topic for treatment within Regional Planning Guidance, as acknowledged in the Draft PPG11 *Regional Planning of 1999* ([see endnote 11](#)). By contrast strategic gaps and green wedges are seen as *local designations* in PPG7 *The Countryside*, and therefore should not be dealt with in regional guidance.

**3.21** Our interviews, and other material, suggest that this distinction has not been as clear cut in the past as the guidance now suggests. Regional Planning Guidance for the South West (RPG10) acknowledges the rural buffer around parts of Swindon and advises that this should continue to be protected against inappropriate development. There is also reference to the rural buffer in the emerging spatial strategy for the South West ([see endnote 12](#)). Where RPG has not referred to the possibility of a Green Belt around a particularly city, this has been a major factor in the rejection of county-promoted proposals. In making recommendations about

the need for a Green Belt around Lincoln, the EIP Panel noted there is no reference to a Green Belt for Lincoln in either RPG 8 or the emerging *Regional Guidance for Spatial Development of the East Midlands*. Similarly, *Regional Guidance in the East Midlands* does not refer to Leicestershire's green wedge policy.

**3.22** *The Sustainable Development Strategy for the South East*, submitted by SERPLAN, suggested that Green Belts and strategic gaps should have the same status in implementing policies for urban containment in the Region (see endnote 13). The EIP Panel Report, however, seeks to make a distinction between Green Belts and strategic gaps. It recommends that strategic gaps should not have a role in shaping regionally-determined patterns of development. It states strategic gaps and other county designations are of local significance only and should not pre-empt the spatial consideration of regional policy in RPG. (see endnote 14) The suggested spatial strategy for the Region includes a major APLE (Area of Planned Expansion) in a location partly covered by a strategic gap near Crawley in West Sussex (see endnote 15). It also suggests there could be amendments to strategic gaps near Southampton and Portsmouth in Hampshire.

**3.23** West Sussex County Council regard their strategic gaps as protecting the character of the County, which they see as a resource of regional significance. They are therefore opposed to the approach taken by the Regional EIP Panel.

#### *Positive Urban Fringe Policies*

**3.24** The Government's strategy for sustainable development *A Better Quality of Life* supports initiatives to create improved open space and wildlife habitats in and around towns. The creation of new woodlands, improved countryside access, informal recreation and land reclamation are all important objectives for the countryside around towns. The urban fringe will be an important area bridging between the forthcoming Urban and Rural White Papers (see endnote 16). All of the counties studied were pursuing positive policies to enhance urban fringe areas. For example, the Great Western Community Forest area is closely co-incident with the area of the Swindon rural buffer, and both Swindon and Lincoln are experimental areas for the Countryside Agency-supported Greenways project. This study was restricted to interviews with policy staff at County level. The detail collected on positive urban fringe measures was, of necessity, limited.

**3.25** In Hampshire the main involvement of the County has been joint work with Districts along the M27 corridor. Supplementary Planning Guidance has been produced for strategic gaps. Examples include the *Eastleigh Southampton Strategic Gap: A Planning and Management Framework for North Stoneham* and the *South West Fareham Countryside Strategy* (see endnote 17). The South West Fareham strategy includes measures to conserve and enhance the historic pattern of the undeveloped landscape, to integrate urban edges with their countryside setting, and to improve public access in the area. In addition, a number of countryside management projects cover strategic gaps. These have been seen as important by Inspectors at local plan inquiries. The County has a separate budget for environmental improvements to strategic gaps.

**3.26** The main vehicle for environmental improvement in the Leicester urban fringe is the *Leicester Urban Fringe Countryside Management Project*. Funded by the Countryside Agency

and seven local authorities, including the City and County Councils, the project aims to:

- manage existing countryside resources;
- enhance the attractiveness of the urban fringe;
- improve accessibility to and within the project area;
- improve peoples awareness of the urban fringe countryside; and
- encourage community action.

Over the 1998-9 period the project has carried out a household survey of residents near to a green wedge, and has progressed management plans for the Anstey Lane and Scapcroft green wedges ([see endnote 18](#)). The National Forest area abuts the urban fringe of Leicester to the north west where it links with the Anstey green wedge. Access and recreation links between the two areas are being promoted.

**3.27** In Norwich attention focuses around river valley and river corridor enhancement. In 1986 Norwich City Council adopted a *Green Plan* which involved creation of a Green Links network. This helped link residential areas to open spaces and river corridors. Following this, two projects the *Wensum Valley Project (1998)* and an *Urban Fringe Project (1990)* were established. Resources from a successful Single Regeneration Budget Challenge Fund bid have been used to assist the Green Links scheme and to provide other greening and access initiatives. The *River Corridor Enhancement Study (1997)* covers an area similar to that defined in the Structure Plan as the special area of restraint around Norwich. It comprises an action plan, Supplementary Planning Guidance, and design guidelines for individual schemes. Among ten opportunities for enhancement, the following are prominent:

- creation of new wildlife habitat and wildlife corridors;
- completion of river and valley walks;
- creation of green links between residential areas and schools and riverside walks; and
- creation of cycleways and linkages to the National Cycling Network ([see endnote 19](#)).

**3.28** West Sussex County Council would like to set up partnerships with Districts to set in place *Strategic Gap Improvement Plans*. These would promote higher quality landscapes and recreation provision than currently exist. The County are investigating the feasibility of using section 106 planning obligations to retain the openness of strategic gap land as compensation, or trade-offs in association with nearby development ([see endnote 20](#)). Land in strategic gaps would be donated or covenanted to local authorities by developers. This land would be managed and improved for public benefit (recreation, nature conservation, access). This process, it is suggested, would make it easier to persuade local people of the need and merit of releasing land for development if they could see benefits in exchange. These suggestions

remain at the feasibility stage.

### *Main Findings*

**3.29** Each strategic restraint designation has a different basic rationale, and a number overlap to some extent with Green Belt purposes. Also there are links to the positive management and enhancement of the environment of the urban fringe covered by such designations.

**3.30** The basic purposes of the designations are as follows:

- for *strategic gaps*; they are to protect the setting and separate identity of settlements, and to avoid coalescence; retain the existing settlement pattern by maintaining the openness of the land; and retain the physical and psychological benefits of having open land near to where people live;
- for *rural buffers*; they are to avoid coalescence with settlements (including villages) near a town until the long-term direction of growth is decided; and
- for *green wedges*; they are to protect strategic open land helping to shape urban growth as it progresses; to preserve and enhance links between urban areas and the countryside; and to facilitate the positive management of land.

**3.31** The main overlap between strategic gap and green wedge and Green Belt purposes is in the area of preventing the coalescence of settlements. Most of the strategic gap and green wedge policies also have the purpose of avoiding coalescence between large built-up areas and villages. The purpose does not however overlap with those of Green Belts. Strategic gap and green wedge policies do not have the purposes of assisting urban regeneration or checking unrestricted sprawl. The restraint policies for Norwich and Lincoln have the purpose of protecting the historic settings of the two cities. But the areas covered by the policy relate to the quality of the natural resources and not just the position of the land. The protection of important open land, in the form of green wedges, is an aim common to four of the counties studied. This does not overlap with Green Belt purposes.

**3.32** There was some confusion over the status of the three types of designation in Regional Planning Guidance; some were referred to, and some were not. The question of how far the three types of designation can restrain regionally -derived patterns of growth has yet to be clarified.

**3.33** All of the Counties studied had pursued positive measures to improve the environment of their urban fringe areas, and such initiatives were often keyed to the particular designations studied. These included strategic gap management frameworks, countryside management projects and river corridor enhancement studies. There was general acceptance of the view that environmental improvement measures were a necessary complement to restraint. This study is, of course, unable to demonstrate that positive policies to enhance the environment are *more* effective in areas covered by green wedge as opposed those covered by to Green Belt policies.

### **Endnotes**

1. West Sussex County Council (1998) *West Sussex Structure Plan 1998: Not Formally Adopted*, Chichester, WSCC, para. 7.19.
2. Hampshire County Council (1996) *Strategic Gaps*, Winchester, HCC, para 3.2.
3. West Sussex County Council (1996) *Environmental Capacity Study*, Chichester, WSCC, para 2.13.4.
4. *Ibid*, para 2.13.5.
5. Hampshire County Council (1996) *op. cit.*, para 1.2.
6. Wiltshire County Council and Swindon Borough Council (1998) *Wiltshire Structure Plan 2011: Swindon Development Appraisal Study*, Swindon, WCC and SBC, sections 6.7, 6.8 and 6.9.
7. DETR (1999) *Housing, Consultation Draft of Revised PPG 3*, London, DETR.
8. Norfolk County Council (1993) *Norfolk Structure Plan*, Norwich, NCC, para 20.5.
9. Norwich City Council (1997) *A River Corridor Enhancement Strategy for Norwich*, Consultation Document, Norwich, NCC, p 2.
10. Lincolnshire County Council (1997) *Lincolnshire Structure Plan Consultation Draft, Analysis of Response and Recommendations for Change, Protection of Urban Fringe Locations*, Lincoln, LCC, pp. 113-115.
11. DETR (1999) *Regional Planning, Consultation Draft of PPG 11*, London, DETR, paras 8.5-8.6. This is also referred to in para 2.2 of PPG 2 *Green Belts* (1995).
12. The Draft Revised Regional Strategy for the South West suggests that the future form and function of the rural buffer could be reviewed to act as green wedges or fingers that would provide accessible breathing space for residents (para 4.1.28).
13. SERPLAN (1998) *A Sustainable Development Strategy for the South East*, SERP 500, London, SERPLAN, policy CD7.
14. DETR (1999) *Regional Planning Guidance for the South East of England*, Public Examination, Report of the Panel, para 6.26.
15. *Ibid*, This states in the context of the Crawley/Gatwick APLE there is a substantial area of land covered by a strategic gap designation which appears to us to have little strategic importance it tails out into open countryside which is pleasant but comparatively ordinary, and it is questionable what the gap it is seeking to protect. It rather looks to us like a second class Green Belt (para 12.117).
16. H M Government (1999) *A Better Quality of Life: A Strategy for Sustainable Development for the United Kingdom*, London, SO, pp 61-64.
17. Hampshire County Council, Test Valley Borough Council and Eastleigh Borough Council (1994) *Eastleigh-Southampton Strategic Gap: A Planning and Management Framework for North Stoneham*, Winchester, HCC. Hampshire County Council and Fareham Borough Council (1995) *South West Fareham Countryside Strategy*, Winchester, HCC.
18. Leicestershire County Council (1999) *The Leicester Urban Fringe: Countryside Management Project*, Annual Report 1998-9, Leicester, LUCMP.
19. Norfolk County Council (1994) *Wensum Valley Strategy*, NCC, Joint Advisory Panel; Norwich City Council (1997) *A River Corridor Enhancement Study for Norwich*, Consultation Paper, Norwich, NCC.
20. See Elson, M. J., N. Mendham and S. Walker (1999) *Countryside Benefits from Developers Contributions, A Report to the Countryside Agency*, Oxford, School of Planning, Oxford Brookes University.

## 4. Permanence And The Definition Of Boundaries

### Introduction

4.1 This chapter assesses the permanence of strategic gap and green wedge policies, and the definition of boundaries of such restraint areas, and how these issues have been handled. In describing permanence a contrast between Green Belt, and strategic gap and green wedge policies can be made. Planning guidance in PPG2 *Green Belts* states the essential characteristic of Green Belts is their permanence. Their protection must be maintained as far as can be seen ahead ([see endnote 1](#)). In practical terms an approved Green Belt in a development plan is required to be long term, that is related to a time scale which is longer than that adopted for other aspects of a structure plan ([see endnote 2](#)). No time period is normally given to long-term. Green Belts should also normally endure beyond the planning horizon of RPG ([see endnote 3](#)).

### Permanence

4.2 There is no national guidance on the permanence of strategic gaps and green wedges in structure plans. In some Counties the position is clear. But confusion has arisen, especially in the Counties where the policy has been widely deployed.

4.3 In its submitted Structure Plan of 1966 Hampshire County Council intended that strategic gaps would have a degree of permanence similar to Green Belts ([see endnote 4](#)). Boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances, such as an overriding need for a particular development. The EIP Panel however saw no case to accord strategic gaps the permanence of Green Belts. They noted with the probability of growth in South Hampshire continuing in the next Plan period, we think it unwise to close any option for the future direction of any urban expansion at this stage ([see endnote 5](#)). In their latest set of proposed amendments the Hampshire authorities suggest strategic gaps should continue to be seen as long-term ([see endnote 6](#)). The Inspector at the Fareham Local Plan Inquiry (LPI) however has interpreted long-term in the context of strategic gaps to be a period at least as long as the development plan ([see endnote 7](#)).

4.4 It is worth noting here that changes have been made to strategic gaps in Hampshire as the Structure Plan has been reviewed. For example, the need to meet strategic housing requirements has led to the deletion of one strategic gap and the substantial alteration of another, both near Basingstoke, in 1994. Also a number of changes have been agreed to strategic gaps in the M27 Corridor through the local plan process. This suggests we have moved to a position where strategic gaps in Hampshire have *de facto* the same duration as the remainder of the policies in the structure plan.

4.5 In West Sussex strategic gaps, as approved in the 1993 Structure Plan, are described as long-term. In terms of status, the 1988 SoS Letter of Approval stated that strategic gaps should not impose a presumption against development, and the 1997 Panel saw the use of strategic gap land as the last stage in a sequential process of searching for new development locations. It stated that the policy should allow for *possible* development in gaps which might become necessary once all other options had been exhausted. However it was also stated that any approved development should not compromise the fundamental integrity of a gap ([see endnote](#)

8). The submitted Structure Plan of 1998, equates long-term with the duration of the Plan, and the planners interviewed accepted that this was now the position.

4.6 The Maidstone Gap policy, approved in the Kent SP of 1996, does not refer to long-term protection of the area. The policy states only that separation between the relevant Medway towns will be maintained. This is quite clearly different to the wording used for Green Belts ([see endnote 9](#)).

4.7 In the case of the Swindon rural buffer, the *Swindon Development Appraisal Study* notes the rural buffer in policy terms, is a step below Green Belt policy. It is a temporary measure of protection from major development which can be revised with each subsequent structure plan review ([see endnote 10](#)). It is therefore not a long-term designation in the same way that Green Belt is. The primary function of the buffer is the prevention of coalescence. However, if the best location for future development, say in terms of reducing the need for travel, lies within the buffer then, it is suggested, the land should be released. The current proposal in the Wiltshire Structure Plan appears to conform with these principles, proposing a southern development area on the edge of Swindon, on land previously defined as rural buffer. A proposal for strategic gap policies around Swindon was rejected by the SoS in 1990. The rural buffer has wider functions, to keep the defined area clear of major development, pending future reviews of the Structure Plan and appraisals of Swindon's development needs ([see endnote 11](#)). The designation functions to secure an orderly release of land for development, and its duration is the same as the period of the structure plan.

4.8 In the context of green wedges in Leicestershire, there is no statement in the Structure Plan on their level of permanence. Local planners see green wedges as a designation which has the same duration as the Structure Plan, and can be re-assessed when the Plan is reviewed. In the Leicestershire case successive Structure Plans have altered the areas covered by existing green wedges to some extent, but these changes have not compromised the integrity of the policy. It should be noted that green wedges in Leicestershire cover far less land than is covered by strategic gaps in Hampshire or West Sussex.

4.9 The policy for the protection of the environmental assets of the Norwich Policy Area does not have the same permanence as Green Belt. The original Letter of Approval for the policy by the SoS in 1993, considered that giving the environmental assets policy a permanence similar to that of Green Belt policy would be undesirable. It would, they stated, in effect freeze the City's pattern of development before medium-term development needs had been taken into account ([see endnote 12](#)). The policy thus has the same duration as other policies in the Plan.

#### *Boundary Definition*

4.10 Linked to questions of permanence are those of boundary definition. Most structure plans list the purposes of their strategic gaps and green wedges, stating that appropriate boundaries will be defined in local plans. Questions surrounding the criteria to be used in defining strategic gaps have received most comment at EIPs and by Inspectors at Local Plan Inquiries. Most DETR interventions have been to seek to limit the extent of strategic gap restraints as compared to those suggested by local authorities.

4.11 In Hampshire, successive EIP Panels have sought to limit strategic gaps to the essential minimum of land. The Hampshire County Council had proposed, in its 1996 Structure Plan,

that strategic gaps should:

- separate large urban areas;
- be of a size which enables them to be a counterweight to the large urban areas they separate; and
- have sufficient width to enable them over a large part of their area to have a predominantly rural and/or open appearance and land use ([see endnote 13](#)).

4.12 The Panel argued that the strategic gaps should be only the essential minimum to avoid coalescence. They should be focused on the narrow points of gaps between settlements where the threat of coalescence is real and undesirable. The Hampshire proposals were seen as too much about the absolute protection of broad areas of countryside and coast. The counterweight argument was seen as having little meaning and the Panel suggested avoiding coalescence should be the sole purpose of strategic gaps.

4.13 The proposed green collar around Southampton (see para 2.9) was seen as too extensive, being drawn both tightly up to the current boundary of the urban area, with parts of its outer edge extending into open countryside free from development. The proposal would, it was argued, be an irreversible restraint on the sustainable development of Southampton. It is now proposed that more limited, discrete gaps, forming narrow areas between *substantial settlements* only, should be defined as strategic gaps ([see endnote 14](#)).

4.14 A large number of criteria have been suggested as relevant to determining the location of strategic gaps. The SoS Letter of Approval to the Structure Plan 1993 suggested two criteria:

- the nature of the developed areas on either side of the gap; and
- the visual perception of the gap, allowing for local topography.

4.15 The Inspector at the Inquiry into the Eastleigh LP ([see endnote 15](#)) in 1998 was unable to define a standard formula for delineating strategic gaps. He considered the following factors most useful:

- distance;
- topography;
- landscape character/type;
- vegetation;
- existing uses and density of buildings;
- nature of urban edges;

- inter-visibility (the ability to see one edge from another);
- intra-visibility (the ability to see both edges from a single point);
- the sense of leaving a place.

He suggested that, as with Green Belts, detailed boundaries on the ground should be logical, reasonable and defensible and readily identifiable through existing durable features of the landscape.

**4.16** In West Sussex criteria for the definition of strategic gap boundaries have been loosened. The 1980 Structure Plan stated that strategic gap boundaries should not normally differ significantly from the boundary of the developed area except to recognise any outstanding allocations for development. By April 1988 the SoS had confirmed that for West Sussex the boundaries of strategic gaps and built up areas should *not necessarily* be coincidental, and that the purpose of gaps was to prevent coalescence, not to impose a presumption against development. The 1998 Plan acknowledges that there may be land between settlements listed which is not within the relevant strategic gap ([see endnote 16](#)).

**4.17** In Kent, Structure Plan policy suggests the detailed criteria for definition of the Medway Towns strategic gap will be listed in local plans. The Tonbridge and Malling LP put forward the following three criteria at the LPI into their Plan in 1998. These were accepted by the County. These are;

- the location of land in relation to adjoining settlements;
- the openness of the land; and
- the visibility of the land from public vantage points.

### *Main Findings*

**4.18** The main findings in respect of permanence and the drawing of boundaries are;

- strategic gaps in Hampshire, West Sussex and Kent have the same duration as other policies in the structure plan; they are not long term as defined for Green Belt policy in PPG 2;
- the rural buffers and green wedges studied also had the same duration as the relevant structure plan;
- in the cases of Hampshire and West Sussex, local opinion would prefer to regard strategic gaps as having the same level of permanence as Green Belts;
- in defining strategic gaps and other restraint designations it is important to only include land that is strictly necessary to fulfil the purposes of the policy;

- factors such as openness, topography, intervisibility, the nature of urban edges and vegetation cover should be taken into account in defining boundaries; and
- clearly identifiable and logical features on the ground should be used to produce defensible boundaries

#### Endnotes

1. DOE (DETR) (1995) *Green Belts*, PPG2, London, HMSO, para
2. *Ibid.*, para 2.12.
3. DETR (1999) *Planning Policy Guidance Note 11: Regional Planning*, Public Consultation Draft, London, DETRA, para 8.6.
4. Hampshire County Council (1997) *Hampshire County Structure Plan 1996-2011 (Review)*, *Report of the Panel*, para 8.6.
5. *Ibid.*, para 8.9
6. Hampshire County Council (1999) *Hampshire County Structure Plan 1996-2011 (Review)*, *Proposed Modifications*, p.49.
7. Fareham Borough Council (1998), *Fareham Borough Local Plan Review Inquiry*, para 3.45.
8. West Sussex County Council (1999) *Mind the Gap*, *Technical Report*, paras 1.16 and 1.18, and Appendix F.
9. Kent County Council (1996).
10. Wiltshire County Council and Swindon Borough Council (1998) *Wiltshire Structure Plan 2011 - Swindon Development Appraisal Study*, para 6.9.3.
11. *Ibid.*, para 6.9.5.
12. DOE (1993) *Norfolk Structure Plan: Norwich Area Alterations*, para 3.6.
13. Hampshire County Council (1996) *Hampshire County Structure Plan (Review) 1996-2011*, para 164.
14. Hampshire County Council (1997) *op. cit.*, paras 8.9-8.15.
15. Eastleigh BC (1998) *Eastleigh Local Plan, Inspectors Report*, paras 2.2.1.2-2.2.1.3.
16. West Sussex County Council (1999) *op.cit.*, paras 1.13-1.17.

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## 5. Development Control Principles And Practice

### *Introduction*

**5.1** This chapter investigates what are considered as appropriate land uses in strategic gaps and green wedges. These are compared to the development control policies for Green Belt outlined in PPG2. The level of detail listed in structure plan policies, as guidance to districts, is also discussed.

### *Development Control in Green Belts*

**5.2** Development control in Green Belts is based on a number of clear principles. There is a *presumption against* inappropriate development in a Green Belt area. Very special circumstances need to be demonstrated by an applicant who wishes to secure permission for uses other than those in a strictly limited list contained in the guidance. The overall aim of the policy is to keep land permanently open. New buildings will usually be inappropriate unless for:

- agriculture and forestry;
- essential facilities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation;
- limited changes for existing dwellings;
- limited infilling in existing villages and limited affordable housing; and
- limited infilling and redevelopment of major existing developed sites.

The re-use of buildings will also, in certain circumstances, be allowed. Mineral extraction need not be inappropriate development in Green Belts, although great care should be taken to ensure that high environmental standards are maintained ([see endnote 1](#)).

### *Development Control in Strategic Gaps and Green Wedges*

**5.3** The principle of retaining openness is common to strategic gap, green wedge and Green Belt policies. In Hampshire, the Structure Plan Review states that within strategic gaps permission will not be given for development which visually or physically diminishes the amount of open and undeveloped land ([see endnote 2](#)). The County Council sees a need for the degree of constraint to be higher than in the general countryside, because of the importance given to retaining these gaps. They consider there are developments which would be allowed in the countryside, perhaps even in Green Belts, such as large institutional uses, which would not be allowed in a strategic gap. This is because the gaps are usually so narrow and limited in extent that any development would affect their openness, and could be seen as contributing to visual or physical coalescence ([see endnote 3](#)). The EIP Panel investigating the Hampshire plan are seeking to qualify this policy, suggesting that any approved development should not *significantly* diminish the extent of a strategic gap ([see endnote 4](#)).

**5.4** The proposed Hampshire formulation is similar to that already operating in Kent. The

Tonbridge and Malling LP policy for the Medway Gap states that development will not be permitted which *significantly* extends the built confines of existing rural settlements or urban areas. This, the LPI Inspector suggests, allows for some possible small-scale development on the fringes of the strategic gap which would not unreasonably compromise its main purpose ([see endnote 5](#)).

5.5 The West Sussex SP of 1993 contained a policy for strategic gaps which is more restrictive than for Green Belts. It established a compelling circumstances test for any development sought within a strategic gap. Uses which could, exceptionally, be regarded as compelling included development essential for:

- agriculture or forestry;
- roads;
- opportunities to meet a demand for quiet informal recreation; and
- mineral extraction and waste disposal ([see endnote 6](#)).

5.6 The EIP Panel into the 1996 Structure Plan, where the written statement contained essentially the same policy, recommended removal of the compelling circumstances test. This was on the basis that it incorrectly indicated the degree of protection which ought to be afforded to strategic gaps ([see endnote 7](#)). The proposed criteria now suggests that proposals would be subject to the most rigorous examination. Development will only be permitted if it will not compromise individually or cumulatively the objectives and fundamental integrity of the gap. Permission may, however, be granted to meet other requirements of the Development Plan ([see endnote 8](#)).

5.7 Development control principles in green wedges of a strategic nature in Leicestershire are:

- to retain the open and undeveloped character of the wedge;
- to retain and create green networks between the countryside and open spaces in the urban areas; and
- to retain and enhance public access, especially for recreation.

5.8 The detailed listing of uses seen as acceptable in Leicestershire is given in [Table 5.1](#). These were informed by Green Belt development control policy elsewhere, allowing for agriculture, forestry and outdoor recreation. In terms of recreation, for example, the plan suggest that outdoor recreational uses such as sports pitches and golf courses are acceptable, but any associated development, essential for operational requirements, should be small in scale and sited so as to retain the open and undeveloped nature of the green wedge. It is suggested that more formal outdoor recreational facilities should be located adjacent to the built up areas, to minimise the need to travel and to lessen the impact on the openness of the wedge. The Plan also discusses park and ride facilities. These, it is suggested, should only be located in a green wedge in exceptional circumstances, and if there is no other suitable site

available outside the green wedge. It is proposed that local plans should elaborate on what types of development would permanently damage the open and undeveloped character of green wedges (see endnote 9). This reverses the logic for specifying development control policies in Green Belts, where only the not unacceptable (ie generally acceptable) uses are listed.

**Table 5.1:** Development Control in Green Wedges in Leicestershire

<p>Only the following uses will be acceptable...provided the development associated with these uses does not permanently damage the open and undeveloped character of the Green Wedge:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. agriculture</li><li>a. outdoor recreation</li><li>b. forestry</li><li>c. footpaths, bridleways and cycleways</li><li>d. mineral uses</li></ul> <p>In addition the following land uses will only be acceptable if appropriate measures are taken to minimise severance and adverse effects on the amenity of the Green Wedge:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>f. road proposals in the development plan</li><li>f. dedicated public transport routes (in exceptional circumstances where there is no alternative route)</li><li>g. park and ride facilities (if no other suitable site outside a Green Wedge is available)</li></ul> <p>Provision will be made in Green Wedges for the retention and creation of green networks between urban open spaces and the countryside, and the retention and enhancement of public access, especially for recreation.</p> <p>Source: Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Structure Plan 1991-2011, policy 6.</p>
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**5.9** One of the principles of current Green Belt development control policy generally is that it is clearly distinguishable from policies for other parts of the countryside. The policy introduces a presumption against development, and a set of extra firm development control provisions which apply in Green Belts and nowhere else. In the case of Norwich, the policy to protect the environmental assets of the City was first proposed as Green Belt. Although Green Belt status was rejected, the development control guidelines of PPG2 were still followed. The Draft Structure Plan Review, submitted in 1998, proposed continuation of this policy, revised to accord with the up-dated PPG2 of 1995.

**5.10** At the recent (1998) Structure Plan EIP, Norfolk County Council suggested that there was a softening of attitude by the Government to the use of national criteria for local designations. This was, they considered, reflected in the Governments response to the Select Committee

report on *Housing*, where it was suggested this might be an issue considered in a future review of PPG 2 (see [endnote 10](#)). The Panel also noted the Government's view that strategic gap and similar policies should, for the time being, carry less weight than Green Belt policy.

**5.11** The Panel felt the proposed policy for environmental assets around Norwich was as restrictive as PPG2. They recommended no change be made however, arguing that:

the matter is not clear cut ... the overriding consideration ... is to maintain continuity between the approved Structure Plan (of 1993) and the present Draft Plan and on balance we have concluded that the policy should stand. Bearing in mind that the policy seems to have worked, it has wide support, the Government's statement is not entirely clear and that tougher policies are already coming forward in the South Norfolk Local Plan, we do not feel it appropriate to change the policy at this time (see [endnote 11](#)).

**5.12** The Swindon rural buffer is also a hybrid policy. The SoS letter of approval for the buffer in 1990 makes the following points;

- the key diagram would show a broad area where there would be a *special presumption against development* likely to lead to the coalescence of settlements;
- the buffer should be designed to operate without the need for precise boundaries to be defined in local plans; and
- the buffer should prevent development which might cumulatively lead to coalescence.

**5.13** The buffer would protect against major development, but would allow for some small-scale development in defined circumstances. The approved policy for the rural buffer suggests that approval will not normally be given for new buildings other than for agriculture, forestry, mineral extraction or other uses appropriate to a rural area. Development in towns and villages and the conversion of buildings within the rural buffer would also be subject to the other policies of the Plan (see [endnote 12](#)). Government Office views on the draft policy in the Proposed Modifications to *Wiltshire 2011* is that references to development control should be removed from the policy; the Explanatory Memorandum in future should refer to limiting development to that appropriate to a rural area.

### *Monitoring*

**5.14** Local authorities were asked how, and in what ways, they monitored the outcomes of strategic gap and green wedge policies. All of the authorities interviewed claimed the policies had been successful in keeping areas open, although virtually no systematically analysed data were available to show this (see [Table 5.2](#)). One-off exercises to inform individual discussion topics at EIPs were the norm. Lincolnshire County Council claimed there were too few development pressures to make monitoring worthwhile around the City. In Swindon, although a monitoring system had been set up, staffing changes had led to a cessation of work on its operation.

**Table 5.2:** The Monitoring Situation in the Case Study Areas

County	Status
West Sussex	milestones monitoring report in 1999; detailed development control analysis for 1994-5.
Hampshire	no formal monitoring; some evidence to LPis.
Leicestershire	no formal monitoring
Kent	no formal monitoring; analysis in small part of Medway Gap for year 1986-7.
Wiltshire	monitoring scheme drawn up, but not implemented.
Lincolnshire	no formal monitoring
Norfolk	no formal monitoring
Suffolk	no formal monitoring

Source: local authority interviews

**5.15** West Sussex County Council had the only systematic monitoring information, mainly because maintaining strategic gaps is seen as a key county milestone. A study of land presently and previously designated as strategic gap, and now no longer designated in plans, shows that 217 hectares, just under one per cent of the total land in strategic gaps, had been lost since their inception in plans. The largest areas deleted are around Crawley, with a small area near Chichester (see endnote 13). The study *Environmental Capacity in West Sussex* analysed the rate of land lost between settlements from 1946 to date. The results showed a reduction in land loss corresponding with the introduction of gaps as policy designations in 1980. Losses since that time have been noted in Selsey, in the Littlehampton area, and on the west side of Worthing, a number associated with road improvements (see endnote 14).

**5.16** The results of a detailed study of applications submitted in strategic gaps in West Sussex in 1994 and 1995 is shown in Table 5.3. This shows that just under one half of applications were permitted. One third of applications refused were taken to appeal. However only one out of the 21 appeals was upheld. The majority of applications permitted related to agriculture and forestry, and transport and utilities. Most of the development permitted resulted in either no additional floorspace or a very small land take of less than 100 sq. m. Some 28 applications were for residential development by infilling or for single plots. The majority of the schemes (of one or two units) were permitted. The main schemes to challenge strategic gap policy recently have been for the expansion of existing employment sites in Littlehampton and Shoreham. The County Council objected in both cases. However the relevant Districts approved the schemes, on the basis that there were no realistic alternative sites, and there was a need to retain and increase jobs in the two areas. A proposal for a Heritage Museum in a strategic gap near Shoreham was refused on appeal in 1998 (see endnote 15).

**Table 5.3:** Planning Decisions in Strategic Gaps in West Sussex: 1994-5

Status	Number of applications	per cent

permitted	103	48.8
refused	66	31.3
refused and taken to appeal	21	10.0
temporary permission	13	6.2
withdrawn	8	3.7
total	211	100.0
	number of appeals	
dismissed	18	
upheld	1	
withdrawn	2	

Source: WSCC (1999) *Mind the Gap*, p13.

**5.17** In Kent, the County Council carried out an appraisal of refusals of major development proposals adjacent to the M20 near Maidstone, within part of the strategic gap. These covered the period 1986-1997. The proposals included a petrol station, non-food retail use, a retail warehouse park, a large hotel and residential uses. Some seven of the 13 schemes went to appeal, and all of the appeals were dismissed. There was strong support from Inspectors for the strategic gap in the appeal decisions. If approved, these schemes would have virtually eroded part of the gap between the north western edge of Maidstone and Ditton.

**5.18** The policy to protect the environmental assets of Norwich was introduced in response, particularly, to increased development pressures resulting from the completion of the Southern By-Pass. At the time the policy was introduced, in the early 1990s, there was considerable pressure for major retail uses around the main junctions. An appeal by Tesco, at the junction of the A11 and the By-Pass, was turned down in 1993 as was a housing scheme in open countryside. A number of smaller-scale proposals, including extensions to a car park, a store on land in the Yare Valley, and a small meeting hall near a railway line, were upheld at appeal in the 1993-4 period. Overall the County Council considers that appeal decisions demonstrate that the policy in the 1993 Structure Plan has proved successful in preventing developments in areas where it is considered it would cause damage to the historic setting of Norwich ([see endnote 16](#)). The County has resisted the inclusion of truck stops, park and ride facilities and long stay car parking as appropriate uses in the policy area.

#### *Main Findings*

**5.19** The main findings in relation to development control policies are that:

- the strategic gap and green wedge policies contained an additional presumption against development, over and above the strict controls normally applied by local authorities in the countryside;
- the main principle deployed was that of the retention of openness in the areas concerned;

this was followed by a concern to retain the integrity of such areas;

- in some counties development control policies in strategic gaps were equally or more stringent than for Green Belts; it was argued these were necessary because of the limited extent of gaps, and the immediate danger of coalescence in many areas;
- Government Offices and EIP Panels have proposed less absolutist prescriptions for new development than local authorities; for example, by introducing the idea that new development should not *significantly* diminish the extent of a gap, thus allowing for small-scale change;
- the policy for the control of the environmental assets of the Norwich policy area was the same as for Green Belts; however Green Belt status had been rejected in the Norwich area in 1993;
- the rural buffer around Swindon is designed to resist major development; smaller-scale change is allowed for in the policy, and development control policies are similar to the remainder of the countryside.

5.20 For development control and monitoring the main findings are that:

- monitoring and other analysis of development control outcomes was at best sketchily done and, at worst, was non-existent;
- all of the authorities interviewed claimed their strategic gap and green wedge policies had been successfully used in development control, and had been upheld by Inspectors at appeal;
- in West Sussex existing local plans were proposing approximately a one per cent reduction in the area of strategic gaps in the County; and important current pressures found related to existing businesses seeking expansion space adjacent to their current sites.

#### Endnotes

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7. *Ibid*, p6, para 1.17.
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Consultation Draft, paras 2.67, 2.70 and 2.76.

10. This appears an incorrect impression of the sentiments in the response.

11. Norfolk County Council (1999) *Norfolk Structure Plan Review 1993-2011, Examination in Public*, para 5.49.

12. Wiltshire County Council and Swindon Borough Council (1998) *Wiltshire Structure Plan 2011 - Swindon Development Appraisal Study*, Appendix 6.5.

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14. West Sussex County Council (1996) *Environmental Capacity in West Sussex*, p92.

15. West Sussex County Council (1999) *op. cit.*, Appendix D.

16. Evidence to EIP on policy N6 of Norfolk Structure Plan by Norfolk County Council, paras 5.7-5.10.

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## 6. The Way Forward

### *The Broad Picture*

**6.1** Strategic gaps and green wedges are well embedded in planning practice at county level. Nearly one half of counties have policies giving an extra presumption against development in the countryside. Locationally the policies are found beyond Green Belts, in particular beyond the Metropolitan Green Belt and in parts of the Outer South East. The policies are extremely popular with local residents and environmental groups.

**6.2** District Councils in the case study areas have sought a greater number of strategic gaps than County authorities thought necessary. This has led to some Counties putting forward strategic gaps which are not truly strategic in their objectives. As a result there has been much technical discussion at EIPs on the valid purposes, extent and level of permanence of strategic gaps. In Leicestershire there have also been pressures from the Districts to define additional green wedges, and these have been resisted by the County. Around Swindon, North Wiltshire District are keen to instil the rural buffer with greater permanence than the other local authorities involved intend. Defining strategic gap and green wedge policies in structure plans has created as much local controversy and technical debate as in many Green Belt areas.

### *Implementing the National Guidance*

**6.3** The guidance in PPG 7 *The Countryside* suggests that strategic gaps and rural buffers should only be maintained if there is reason to believe that normal planning policies cannot provide the necessary protection. There has been a small amount of local-level policy analysis on this issue since the guidance was issued in January 1997. Lincolnshire County Council compared normal countryside policies, with green wedges and Green Belt as part of the consultation stage of their most recent Structure Plan. Swindon Borough Council also considered strategic gaps as an alternative to rural buffers in their recent study of development potential around the Town. However there has been little in-depth analysis which has *demonstrated* that normal countryside policies are inadequate in any of the study areas. A more important factor has been the backing for such policies at district council level. The support of West Lindsey and North Kesteven District Councils was seen as of major importance for the introduction of green wedge policies around Lincoln. Otherwise Panels have assessed the weight of opinion at EIPs before coming to judgements. This appears to have been the case around Norwich, where there was relatively little development control evidence confirming a problem. The main trigger appeared to be development pressures generated by the new Southern By-Pass.

**6.4** It is also clear that there is no agreement on how strategic gaps, green wedges or rural buffer zones should be defined. The guidance in PPG7 should be revised, or a new section should be introduced in PPG2, to clarify the purposes, extent and level of permanence of these policies. The process of negotiating around different strategic gap formulations has been time consuming and complex. In addition, there have been questions over the distinction between strategic gaps and local gaps, and how far the latter should be covered in structure plans. Confusion continues in some areas. A number of the stakeholders around Swindon consider the rural buffer to be a Green Belt, as evidenced by the existence of a Green Belt Protection

Committee in the area!

#### *Overlap with Green Belts*

**6.5** The House of Commons Environment Committee have suggested that where the functions of strategic gaps and rural buffers overlap with those of Green Belt, consideration should be given to according them the same status. This study suggests that strategic gaps and green wedges do have one or two purposes in common with Green Belts, but that rural buffers do not. *Strategic gaps* share the purpose of avoiding coalescence, but do not share any other key attributes. As used to date strategic gaps do not have:

- the same level of presumption against development;
- the same level of permanence, not being long-term as defined in PPG2; and
- the need to demonstrate exceptional circumstances for the adjustment of boundaries.

**6.6** *Rural buffers* do not share any purposes with Green Belts as they are designed to maintain separation between a large town and surrounding villages. In addition they imply no strict presumption against development in the same way as Green Belts, or level of permanence beyond the period of the structure plan. *Green wedges* can be used to perform an anti-coalescence function, and may help protect the setting and character of historic towns, two Green Belt purposes. In this case also there is no additional presumption against development as in Green Belts, or level of permanence beyond the plan period.

**6.7** Strategic gaps, rural buffers and green wedges are thus more flexible than Green Belts, being open to possible adjustment at each review of the structure plan. They currently operate as a second order restraint, in contrast to Green Belts which are a first order restraint. In the context of searching for new land for development, second order restraint areas can be considered along with other possible locations (such as urban brownfield land or sites on the edges of urban areas and villages). In the case of land designated as Green Belt, only in exceptional circumstances can it be released for development.

#### *The Three Models*

**6.8** Discussion and debate at local authority level concerning restraint policies has almost exclusively focused on the Green Belt model. However restraint policies can take many forms. A clear finding of this study is that there are *three models* emerging, each appropriate to different sets of circumstances. Their key attributes are as shown in Tables [6.1](#), [6.2](#) & [6.3](#).

**6.9** Taking the essential elements from structure plan submissions, EIPs and SoS Decision letters, the features of strategic gaps appear to be those listed in [Table 6.1](#). The key attributes are that strategic gaps would be strictly limited in scale, being only the minimum size needed for their separation role. They are useful where the authority wishes to avoid coalescence between substantial urban areas, but where a Green Belt cannot be justified. Side such a pattern would leave some alternatives for development on the peripheries of urban areas where coalescence is not a problem. Strategic gaps would have the same duration as other structure plan policies, and would have strict development control policies designed to retain

the openness of the land. Having a lower level of permanence than Green Belts, this type of policy could lead to the creation of hope value for landowners and speculative development pressures. There was little evidence from the interviews carried out during the study however that this had occurred within existing strategic gaps.

**Table 6.1:** Strategic Gaps - Essential Features

purposes	avoidance of coalescence and protection of the setting of urban areas
location	between <i>substantial</i> urban areas
size	generally up to two miles wide, no more land than is necessary for protection where there is a <i>real risk</i> of coalescence
permanence	same duration as the structure plan
development control	strict controls, allowing for area to be kept <i>predominantly</i> open, similar to Green Belt.

6.10 Rural buffers, as in the model in [Table 6.2](#), would be more extensive than strategic gaps. They would also help protect the countryside, and restrict coalescence between an urban area and surrounding villages. They would have potential economic benefits in shaping orderly development, as long as it could be ensured that sufficient new land would be released at each structure plan review. The main concern is that once approved the designation would be regarded by local interests as a Green Belt proper, with boundaries only being alterable in exceptional circumstances.

**Table 6.2:** Rural Buffers - Essential Features

purposes	avoidance of coalescence and protection of the countryside
location	around major town/city with high propensity for growth, between the town/city and surrounding smaller settlements, including villages
size	up to five miles wide
permanence	can be revised at reviews of the structure plan
development control	restricts major development, allows for small-scale rural development, including farm diversification
other	could be abandoned or turned into Green Belt when long-term direction of the growth of the town/city decided.

6.11 Green wedges have a mixture of purposes which include both the protection of important open land within the city fabric, and the protection of settlements on the urban periphery from coalescence. The green wedges found in this study were up to one mile wide within city areas, but their definition depended on factors such as topography, existing open land uses, and levels of recreational access. The benefits of green wedges as they are evolving in the case study areas are that they:

- retain good quality environmental assets;
- are likely to be more readily recognised and understood by the public; and
- allow some choice of peripheral development for local authorities in locations of generally lesser environmental quality.

The main problem is that, apart from the case of Leicestershire, the green wedge examples in this study have yet to be fully established and articulated. Also, the reasons for changes in the pattern of green wedges in Leicestershire over the last 15 years require more detailed investigation at City and District level to establish if there are significant definitional or other implementation problems.

**Table 6.3:** Green Wedges - Essential Features

purposes	protect important open land to help shape growth of town/city; protect good quality environmental assets, avoid coalescence
location	around town and city; penetrating into town/city
size	green wedges within urban areas may be up to one mile wide, peripheral restraint wedges generally up to four miles wide, but depends on pattern of environmental features.
permanence	the duration of the structure plan
development control	Green Belt prescription, or similar

*The Way Ahead*

**6.12** Before coming to a view on the future of strategic gaps and green wedges, it will be necessary to assess how far they can deliver desirable planning outcomes. Some of the potential outcomes discussed in this study include:

- clear cut urban-rural boundaries;
- separate identity of settlements/local distinctiveness;
- a reduction in greenfield land-take;
- the retention and enhancement of biodiversity;
- quality of life improvements, including improvements in access to the countryside near towns; and
- the retention of flexibility for some selected peripheral development in accord with sustainable development principles.

However, many of these outcomes are deliverable also by other policies. How far strategic gap and green wedge policies can make a difference is a matter of judgement. Certainly there was a feeling locally among the authorities interviewed that strategic gaps and green wedges were of considerable additional value to normal countryside policies. However they add an element of complexity to the planning of countryside areas. The Government, in the Draft of PPG12, states that it is keen to avoid over elaboration in structure plans.

**6.13** The main alternatives discussed here are to:

- make it clear that strategic gaps, rural buffers and green wedges are not acceptable in structure plans;

- make such designations into Green Belts proper, or
- promote the best features chosen from among the three restraint models.

These possibilities are discussed, in turn, briefly below:

## Alternative Scenarios

### *Removal from Structure Plans*

**6.14** This does not appear feasible, given the strength of local support such designations have, unless stakeholders can be convinced that the benefits (listed in paragraph 6.12 above) can be delivered by other means. Strategic gap, rural buffer and green wedge policies add coherence to urban fringe policies generally. They are understood as no go areas by the development industry. The local authorities interviewed in this study clearly see the need for such localised restraint policies, due to the nature of development pressures at the edges of urban areas. If these policies were to be ruled out in planning guidance in a revised PPG2 or PPG7, local authorities would require greater assurances of Government (and particularly GO) support for countryside policies generally at the urban fringe. The status of policies in development plans, supported by Section 54A of the Act, is not yet regarded by the authorities studied as a sufficient substitute for local designations.

### *Green Belt Status*

**6.15** The implications of giving *strategic gaps* a status similar to Green Belts are perhaps the least consequential of the three models. This is because of their relatively limited extent. The drawbacks are nevertheless significant. They appear to fall into three areas; according strategic gaps the status of Green Belts would:

- reduce peripheral development options on the edges of large towns in locations favourable to sustainable development, and in relatively buoyant areas outside Green Belts;
- remove the urban growth management roles of strategic gaps, whereby they can be adjusted in certain circumstances as long as settlement separation is maintained; and
- create a new set of problems over the interpretation of permanence. For example:
  - o would such areas be subject to the same provisions for safeguarded land as outlined in paragraph 2.12 of PPG2?;
  - o would authorities be able to argue that where strategic gaps are not extensive, then no safeguarded land would be needed?

**6.16** It is already possible to use Green Belts in a limited way in strategic gap roles. The examples of Green Belt between Burton-on-Trent and Swadlincote, and between settlements on the Fylde, show that this is the case. It would be a question for local authorities to justify why they needed Green Belt status for their strategic gap policies under the criteria in para

2.14 of PPG2. The guidance states that the need for a Green Belt could *first* be demonstrated at structure plan level, although other evidence in this study has suggested that RPG is also of key importance here (see para 3.20-3.23).

**6.17** It would be possible to argue that *rural buffers* are an interim stage on the way to designating a Green Belt. They allow coalescence of settlements to be avoided and the protection of the countryside to be secured, while long-term options for the growth of a particular town are being assessed. If the long-term direction is agreed in policy, then it would be open for local planning authorities to argue that a Green Belt could be designated, as the appropriate level of permanence had been achieved. If development pressures eased, then it would be possible to argue, conversely, that the rural buffer should be replaced by strategic gaps, green wedges or normal countryside policies.

**6.18** If *green wedge* policies were to be accorded Green Belt status they would involve one basic change to the form of Green Belts. At present Green Belts are largely restraint policies which operate *around the periphery* of urban areas. This change would involve them also penetrating urban areas to separate neighbourhoods and retain urban open land, two purposes which have not traditionally been performed by Green Belt. In doing this the new Green Belts would be firmer shaping devices for urban areas, but there would remain a need to retain parts of urban peripheries free of the policy, as demonstrated in the Leicester and Norwich examples. Questions of how far green wedges are strategic in particular instances, what distance they should penetrate into urban areas, and the extent to which they should be seen as separating urban neighbourhoods, would also be important.

#### *New Local Restraint Policies*

**6.19** The third way forward would be to promote the best features of the local restraint policies discovered in this study. In this scenario it is suggested that structure plans and UDP Part I could designate, in approved circumstances, the following types of local restraint policy:

- rural buffers and strategic gaps; and
- green wedges

**6.20** For rural buffers and strategic gaps the emphasis would be on avoiding coalescence between settlements (including villages and larger urban areas) and on retaining the separate identity of settlements. In their most extensive form these policies would comprise rural buffers, for example in areas with particularly rapid physical growth. In areas where the problems of physical growth are more limited, strategic gaps would be defined. In both instances these policies would have the same duration as other policies in the structure plan or UDP Part I plan. These designations would help tackle issues of the orderly development of urban areas and would be limited (second order) urban growth management tools.

**6.21** Green wedges would follow the Leicestershire model, allowing the identification of structurally important areas of open land which, by their protection, would also help shape the form and direction of development. The principle of identifying areas of land which encompass high quality natural resources (for example landscapes and wildlife areas), and areas suitable for countryside access, would be established in structure plans and UDP Part I plans. These

would be particularly appropriate to larger cities where links between urban areas and the surrounding countryside may be tenuous. In short they would be seen as designations linking town and country, with the restraint purposes of the designation being less prominent. The idea would be not to perpetuate static views of the urban fringe, but to help deliver sustainability gains both in the urban fabric and the urban fringe countryside.

#### *Implications for Green Belt Policy*

6.22 One impression standing out clearly from this study was how the local planners operating strategic gap, rural buffer and green wedge policies considered them an improvement on Green Belt. They were capable of delivering wider objectives, while giving more flexibility to respond to newly-emphasised priorities of sustainable development. This brings forward the questions of how far the existing purposes and long-term rigidities of Green Belt policy are appropriate in current circumstances. An analysis in particularly county areas could suggest that the purposes for which Green Belts were originally defined have in some cases evanesced, and that strategic gap or green wedge policies should be considered as appropriate in their place.

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# ANNEXE I viii

RPG 12

2001



GOVERNMENT OFFICE  
FOR YORKSHIRE AND THE HUMBER

# Regional Planning Guidance for Yorkshire and the Humber (RPG12)



October 2001

London: The Stationery Office

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which support sustainable development objectives, provide a good range of local services, and which are the most accessible in the area by a range of transport modes. Yorkshire Forward and the Countryside Agency's market towns initiative is a relevant consideration.

4.9 Policy P1 describes the strategic pattern of development that should take place in the region. Local planning authorities should seek to identify all opportunities for development within urban areas, starting with previously-developed land which is suitable for development (i.e. does not need to be protected for reasons such as biodiversity, amenity, recreational or landscape/townscape value or to avoid flood risk). If sufficient land cannot be identified within the urban areas, well-planned extensions to them should be considered next.

4.10 It is only if sustainable forms of development cannot be found in the above manner that the third option need be considered i.e. at nodes along public transport corridors. Such corridors could vary considerably according to local circumstances, but the common characteristics would be:-

- a corridor would run from within a main urban area
- its spine would be a public transport route with spare capacity or the potential to develop new services and facilities, particularly rail-based, which study shows will attract a significant proportion of the trips generated
- potential or already allocated sites at accessible nodes where development could be accommodated without generating local traffic congestion, leading to ribbon development, sacrificing high quality landscape or undermining the fundamental objectives of the Green Belt

4.11 Such corridor studies have the potential for reducing the travel demands that would arise from a less integrated approach, and allow more of these demands to be met by public transport. They may well cross boundaries of strategic planning areas, and where this is the case should be the subject of

joint studies. Guidance relevant to such studies can be found in Chapter 3 section 2 of "Planning for Sustainable Development: Towards Better Practice" (DETR 1998).

4.12 Policy P1 recognises that, although most development should be focussed on the main urban areas, there will also be a need for development in smaller towns and rural areas. As with the main urban areas, opportunities should be identified in market and coalfield towns, but also in smaller settlements where appropriate in the context of Policy P1.

4.13 The final part of Policy P1 supplements the general approach to defining strategic patterns of development in urban and rural areas by identifying three regionally significant locations: Dearne Valley Development Zone; Humber Trade Zone; and West Yorkshire/Barnsley area. Details of the implications for these locations are included in the sub-regional sections at the end of this chapter.

## GREEN BELTS

4.14 The general extent of the Green Belts in the region is shown on the Key Diagram. In general the Green Belts in the region have helped to achieve the aims set out in paragraph 15 of PPG2, although in themselves they have not been fully able to prevent the dispersion of development and activity described in Chapter 2.

### Policy P2 Green Belts

- a) *The Green Belts in North, South and West Yorkshire have a valuable role in supporting urban renaissance and concentration, as well as conserving countryside, and their general extent should not be changed.*
- b) *More localised review of Green Belt boundaries may be necessary in some places through development plan reviews, but only if justified by exceptional local*

*circumstances. Any such review should clearly demonstrate, having regard to the regional spatial strategy and other relevant RPG policies that release of land:-*

- i) is necessary to meet the wider principles of sustainable development in comparison with other available options;*
  - ii) is justified by reference to the capacity of the existing urban area, and the need to enable development to proceed to achieve economic regeneration or to maintain a buoyant economy or to meet housing requirements;*
  - iii) does not materially harm the fundamental aim of national Green Belt policy in the area concerned.*
- c) Localised reviews should also consider whether exceptional circumstances exist to include additional land as Green Belt.*

4.15 The implementation of the regional spatial strategy should not require any change to the general extent of Green Belt for the foreseeable future. However there may be a more specific and localised need to reconsider the extent of Green Belt to meet identifiable development needs for which urban locations are not available and for which alternative sites would be significantly less sustainable. In accordance with Policy P1, any such changes ought to be considered first on the edge of the urban areas and should only be proposed in development plan reviews following the completion of urban capacity studies and consideration of strategic options, where appropriate in consultation with adjoining local planning authorities. Any proposal to alter an established Green Belt boundary should be related to a longer-term time-scale than other aspects of the development plan. Therefore, if land is to be taken out of the Green Belt to meet identifiable development needs, consideration should also be given to designating safeguarded land related to it in accordance with the advice in Annex B of PPG2. Other than in such circumstances, it will not be appropriate to

change established Green Belt boundaries in order to provide safeguarded land – to do so would undermine the long term strategy for urban renaissance and would not comply with the criteria set out in Policy P2. Existing safeguarded land should be reviewed in the context of Policy P3 below. Further commentary on Green Belt is contained in the sub-regional sections at the end of this chapter.

## REVIEW OF EXISTING COMMITMENTS

4.16 A significant issue in the region is the large stock of existing permissions and allocations, particularly for housing and economic development. If this is not addressed, the ability to plan, monitor and manage and achieve the regional spatial strategy will be undermined. Policy P3 is therefore of strategic importance.

4.17 In the case of employment land, reviews should be informed by the regional employment land survey (see Chapter 5). Development plan policies relating to all land that is retained for employment use following such a review should make it clear that retail and leisure uses are not appropriate.

4.18 In the case of housing land it is vital to the attainment of the spatial strategy that sites outside urban areas are reviewed as a matter of urgency and that in the meantime planning applications are determined in the context of the advice in PPG3 paragraph 38 and Policies H2 and H3.

4.19 Existing road schemes in development plans, many of which have a long history, should be reviewed to ensure that they are consistent with the spatial strategy which is based on minimising the need to travel and maximising the use of alternative modes to the car. Schemes which are not consistent should be excluded from development plans.

where there are significant implications for spatial change at the regional or sub-regional level.

## North Yorkshire Sub-region

### STRATEGIC PATTERNS OF DEVELOPMENT

4.21 The main urban areas of Harrogate, Scarborough and York should, in accordance with Policies P1, E4 and H2, be the focus for economic and housing development in the sub-region. York is of regional significance and development should be accommodated to build on the success of its economy in a sustainable way which respects its historic character. Application of the sequential approach should mean that there will be no need for authorities in the sub-region to undertake corridor studies.

4.22 There are several market towns in the sub-region including Malton, Northallerton, Richmond, Ripon, Selby, Settle, Skipton and Whitby which, along with other towns identified through the development plan process as described in paragraph 4.8, should be the focus for economic and housing development of a scale and type appropriate to rural areas in accordance with Policies P1, E2 and H2 to enhance their role as service/employment centres. The potential for mixed use conversions of existing buildings in these settlements should be exploited.

4.23 Catterick Garrison in Richmondshire is the largest garrison town in the north of the country. Whether it should be included in the market town category, and its potential for growth, are matters to be determined through the structure and local plan process in accordance with relevant policies in RPG and the overall spatial strategy.

### REGENERATION PRIORITY AREAS

4.24 Part of Selby District falls within the coalfield area which is first priority for regeneration in the region (Policy S2) although it is not eligible for

Objective 1 funding. The Selby coalfield may close down during the RPG period, in which case the future use of the surface sites, which are in rural locations, would need to be carefully considered in accordance with sustainable development principles, including the locational criteria in Policy P1 and E4.

4.25 The sub-region contains fairly extensive remote rural and coastal areas which fall into the second priority for regeneration (S2). Those currently eligible for Objective 2 funding are shown on the Key Diagram. Development plans for these, and other rural parts of the sub-region, will need in particular to promote regeneration.

### RURAL AND COASTAL ISSUES

4.26 North Yorkshire is the most rural part of the region and contains extensive areas of high quality landscape, including the Yorkshire Dales and North York Moors National Parks and Nidderdale and Howardian Hills AONBs, parts of the Forest of Bowland AONB, and coastline. The important inter-relationships between agriculture, estate management, wildlife, tourism and recreation need to be addressed in development plans in the sub-region. Policies on rural employment (E2), tourism (E6), agriculture (N5), and the coast (R1) will be of particular significance.

4.27 The need to continue the restructuring of the coastal economy is essential, in particular to address acute social and economic problems within the resort towns such as Filey, Scarborough and Whitby. Aside from accommodating tourist pressure in a diverse and sensitive environment, there is a need for new employment development.

### GREEN BELT

4.28 There are two Green Belts in the sub-region: that around York, and that to the east and south of Harrogate and along the western side of Selby district which form an integral part of the Green Belt around the West Yorkshire conurbation.

4.29 The general extent of the York Green Belt was approved in 1980 and the detailed boundaries are yet to be finalised. In so doing account should be taken of Policy P2 and of the need to ensure that it will not need to be amended again at the end of the plan period.

4.30 It is unlikely that there will be any need to alter the Green Belt in Harrogate or in Selby (once it is established in the district-wide local plan) in order to implement the regional spatial strategy.

## EMPLOYMENT LAND

4.31 In 1999 there was around 30 years supply of undeveloped employment land in the North Yorkshire sub-region based on past rates of development, 80% of which was greenfield. It is important therefore that all existing allocations are reviewed in accordance with Policy P3.

4.32 The majority of employment land in the region should be to meet sub-regional and local development needs (E3d). This should be focussed on the main urban areas and market and coastal towns in accordance with Policies P1 and E4, with particular emphasis on unlocking the potential of appropriate sites within the regeneration priority areas.

4.33 The distribution of the regionally significant employment sites in the region will not be finalised until after the completion of the regional employment land survey, but it is likely that one premium site will be required in the sub-region. This should be well located in relation to the City of York in accordance with the criteria set out in Policy E4. Such a site could be suitable for a science and technology park (Policy E4b)(ii), capitalising on relations with York University and in accordance with the "centres of excellence" concept. In bringing this proposal forward full consideration should be given to complementary measures to ensure that employment opportunities and the economic benefits will be accessible to areas in need of regeneration.

## HOUSING

4.34 The annual rate of housing provision in the North Yorkshire sub-region should be around 2,500 in accordance with Policy H1. This represents a reduction compared to the past. However, initial estimates of urban potential done at a regional level suggest that there may not be sufficient capacity within existing settlements to accommodate this level of housing in the longer term. Local urban capacity studies should examine this further and it is particularly important that local planning authorities apply Policies H2 and H3 to ensure that greenfield sites are not released unnecessarily and that additional provision is focussed on the urban areas.

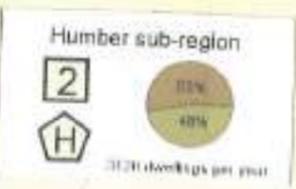
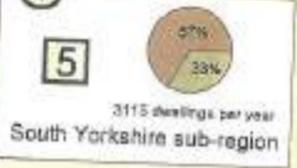
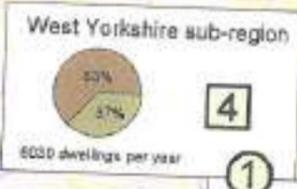
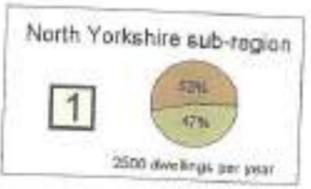
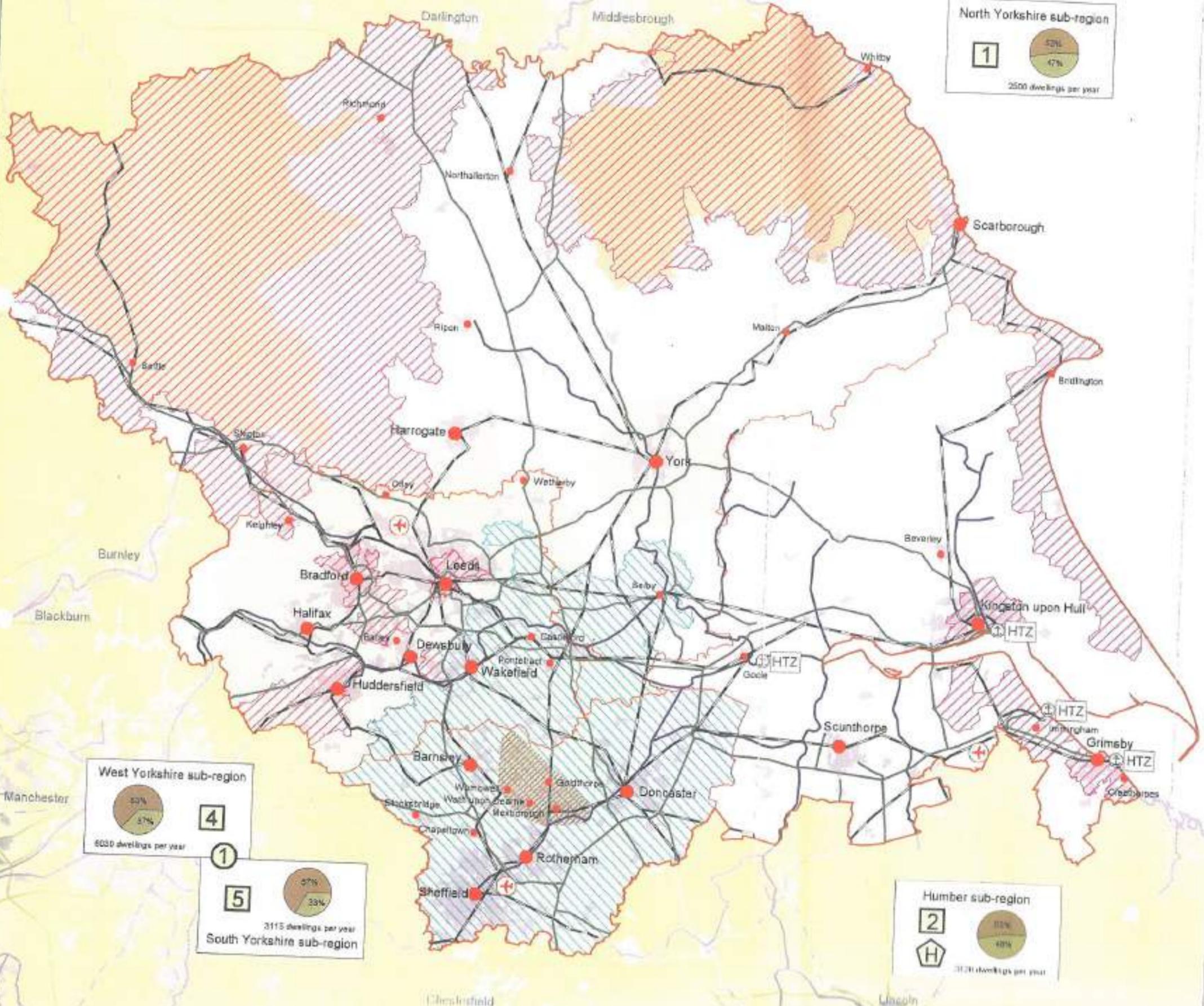
4.35 The provisional target for the provision of dwellings on previously-developed land and through conversions in the North Yorkshire sub-region is 53% (see Table H1 in Chapter 6). This is below the regional average due to the limited availability of suitably located previously-developed sites. It will need to be reviewed in the context of local urban capacity studies.

4.36 The sub-region contains a number of high demand areas, including Harrogate and York and the more accessible parts of Selby, Ryedale and the National Parks (where the demand for second homes is a particular issue). In these areas localised shortages of affordable housing is a particularly significant issue and local authorities should consider whether affordable homes should be sought on sites down to 15 dwellings/0.5 ha in accordance with Policy H4. In settlements of 3000 or less no thresholds apply and local authorities can seek a proportion of affordable housing even on the smallest sites.

## TRANSPORT

4.37 The focus of development in the three main urban areas of Harrogate, York and Scarborough needs to be matched by appropriate transport strategies in development plans and local transport plans for these areas. Existing local transport plans for all three areas have recognised the importance

# 10. KEY DIAGRAM



## Notation Panel

- Regional boundary
  - Sub-regional boundary
- ### Strategy
- First priority regeneration area E2
  - Second priority regeneration areas E2
  - Deane Valley Development Zone P1
  - Humber Trade Zone P1
  - Green Belt P2
  - National Parks

- ### Settlements
- Main urban areas P1 E1 E4 H2 T5 SDC3
  - Examples of market and coalfield towns P1 E1 E2 H2 T6 SDC3

- ### Economy
- Major single user site E3
  - Indicative estimate of no. of premium employment sites E3
  - Major Humber estuary-related sites E3

- ### Housing
- % on previously developed land and through conversions H1
  - Average annual housing provision 1998-2016 H1

- ### Transport
- Strategic highway network E4 T1 T3 T8 T10
  - Strategic rail network E4 T1 T3 T10
  - Navigable waterways E4 T1 T3 T10
  - Main ports P1 T1 T3 T10
  - Commercial airports T8 T10

Congestion on the strategic road network and the targeted programme of improvements are shown on Map 5

- ### Environment
- Environmental designations are shown on Map 6
  - Countryside character and natural areas are shown on Map 7
  - Agricultural land quality is shown on Map 8
  - Flood risk areas are shown on Map 9

Map produced by the Geographic Unit, DETRA, Leeds  
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# ANNEXE I ix

EXTRACTS PPG2

2001

mineral working sites within Green Belts achieve suitable environmental standards and restoration. Relevant advice is in MPG2 and MPG7. Paragraph 3.13 below is also relevant to mineral extraction.

**3.12** The statutory definition of development includes engineering and other operations, and the making of any material change in the use of land. The carrying out of such operations and the making of material changes in the use of land are inappropriate development unless they maintain openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land in the Green Belt. (Advice on material changes in the use of buildings is given in paragraph 3.8 above).

#### *Land use objectives*

**3.13** When any large-scale development or redevelopment of land occurs in the Green Belt (including mineral extraction, the tipping of waste, and road and other infrastructure developments or improvements), it should, so far as possible contribute to the achievement of the objectives for the use of land in Green Belts (see paragraph 1.6). This approach applies to large-scale developments irrespective of whether they are appropriate development<sup>4</sup>, or inappropriate development which is justified by very special circumstances. Development plans should make clear the local planning authority's intended approach.

**3.14** Planning obligations may be used to offset the loss of or impact on any amenity present on a site prior to development (see DoE Circular 16/91). In the case where amenity on a site adjacent to the Green Belt is lost as a result of development on that site, it may be reasonable for obligations to provide for offsetting benefits on land in the Green Belt, as long as there is a direct relationship between the two sites.

#### *Visual amenity*

**3.15** The visual amenities of the Green Belt should not be injured by proposals for development within or conspicuous from the Green Belt which, although they would not prejudice the purposes of including land in Green Belts, might be visually detrimental by reason of their siting, materials or design.

#### *Community Forests*

**3.16** Community Forests offer valuable opportunities for improving the environment around towns, by upgrading the landscape and providing for recreation and wildlife. An approved Community Forest plan may be a material consideration in preparing development plans and in deciding planning applications. Any development proposals within Community Forests in the Green Belt should be subject to the normal policies controlling development in Green Belts, and should respect the woodland setting.

*This PPG was amended with effect from 27 March 2001 by Annex E of PPG13(Transport) which inserted new paragraphs 3.17-3.20 as below:*

#### **Park and ride**

**3.17** The countryside immediately around urban areas will often be the preferred location for park and ride schemes. In many instances, such land may be designated as Green Belt. The Governments commitment to maintaining the openness of the Green Belt means that when seeking to locate park

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<sup>4</sup> But see paragraph C4 of Annex C regarding the redevelopment of major developed sites.

# ANNEXE I x

PARAGRAPHS 79-89 NPPF

2012

78. Local policy for managing development within a Local Green Space should be consistent with policy for Green Belts.

## 9. Protecting Green Belt land

79. The Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.
80. Green Belt serves five purposes:
- to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
  - to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
  - to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
  - to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
  - to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.
81. Once Green Belts have been defined, local planning authorities should plan positively to enhance the beneficial use of the Green Belt, such as looking for opportunities to provide access; to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation; to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity; or to improve damaged and derelict land.
82. The general extent of Green Belts across the country is already established. New Green Belts should only be established in exceptional circumstances, for example when planning for larger scale development such as new settlements or major urban extensions. If proposing a new Green Belt, local planning authorities should:
- demonstrate why normal planning and development management policies would not be adequate;
  - set out whether any major changes in circumstances have made the adoption of this exceptional measure necessary;
  - show what the consequences of the proposal would be for sustainable development;
  - demonstrate the necessity for the Green Belt and its consistency with Local Plans for adjoining areas; and
  - show how the Green Belt would meet the other objectives of the Framework.
83. Local planning authorities with Green Belts in their area should establish Green Belt boundaries in their Local Plans which set the framework for Green Belt and settlement policy. Once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances, through the preparation or review of the Local Plan. At that time, authorities should consider the Green

- Belt boundaries having regard to their intended permanence in the long term, so that they should be capable of enduring beyond the plan period.
84. When drawing up or reviewing Green Belt boundaries local planning authorities should take account of the need to promote sustainable patterns of development. They should consider the consequences for sustainable development of channelling development towards urban areas inside the Green Belt boundary, towards towns and villages inset within the Green Belt or towards locations beyond the outer Green Belt boundary.
85. When defining boundaries, local planning authorities should:
- ensure consistency with the Local Plan strategy for meeting identified requirements for sustainable development;
  - not include land which it is unnecessary to keep permanently open;
  - where necessary, identify in their plans areas of 'safeguarded land' between the urban area and the Green Belt, in order to meet longer-term development needs stretching well beyond the plan period;
  - make clear that the safeguarded land is not allocated for development at the present time. Planning permission for the permanent development of safeguarded land should only be granted following a Local Plan review which proposes the development;
  - satisfy themselves that Green Belt boundaries will not need to be altered at the end of the development plan period; and
  - define boundaries clearly, using physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent.
86. If it is necessary to prevent development in a village primarily because of the important contribution which the open character of the village makes to the openness of the Green Belt, the village should be included in the Green Belt. If, however, the character of the village needs to be protected for other reasons, other means should be used, such as conservation area or normal development management policies, and the village should be excluded from the Green Belt.
87. As with previous Green Belt policy, inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.
88. When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.
89. A local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in Green Belt. Exceptions to this are:
- buildings for agriculture and forestry;

- provision of appropriate facilities for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation and for cemeteries, as long as it preserves the openness of the Green Belt and does not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;
  - the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building;
  - the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;
  - limited infilling in villages, and limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the Local Plan; or
  - limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed sites (brownfield land), whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it than the existing development.
90. Certain other forms of development are also not inappropriate in Green Belt provided they preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land in Green Belt. These are:
- mineral extraction;
  - engineering operations;
  - local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location;
  - the re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction; and
  - development brought forward under a Community Right to Build Order.
91. When located in the Green Belt, elements of many renewable energy projects will comprise inappropriate development. In such cases developers will need to demonstrate very special circumstances if projects are to proceed. Such very special circumstances may include the wider environmental benefits associated with increased production of energy from renewable sources.
92. Community Forests offer valuable opportunities for improving the environment around towns, by upgrading the landscape and providing for recreation and wildlife. An approved Community Forest plan may be a material consideration in preparing development plans and in deciding planning applications. Any development proposals within Community Forests in the Green Belt should be subject to the normal policies controlling development in Green Belts.
- ## 10. Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
93. Planning plays a key role in helping shape places to secure radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimising vulnerability and providing resilience to the impacts of climate change, and supporting the delivery of renewable

# ANNEXE II

PRIMARY POLICY

BACKGROUND MATERIAL

# ANNEXE II i

REPORT OF SURVEYS SETEMBER 1979

NYCC.

[Evidence base to NYCSP 1980]

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NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

COUNTY STRUCTURE PLAN

REPORT OF SURVEY

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R Cooper Kenyon  
 BSc FRPI FRICS FRSA MBIM  
 County Planning Officer

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September 1979

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## The Green Belt

- 12.38 Following NoRLG Circular 42/55 Local Planning Authorities were requested to consider the applicability of green belts to their area. The emphasis was placed, not on defining positive uses within a green belt but on the need to restrict urban sprawl and to safeguard the countryside around towns.

Land is currently designated and protected as Green Belt in the southern part of Harrogate District, in the western part of Selby District. The area around York enjoys "sketch plan" status.

- 12.39 The application of Green Belt, and indeed other negative policies, does not leave the landscape unchanged since the requirements of legitimate rural uses lead to modifications in the landscape. Moreover the logic of a restrictive Green Belt policy implies that pressure will be diverted to land beyond the outermost line of the Green Belt which might be of higher landscape quality. A Green Belt is a protected ring around an urban area and just like a town contains great variations of land use and landscape character. Such variations are not recognised in the blanket Green Belt policies and have not markedly assisted in land management problems on the urban fringe.

### (b) Positive Works by Local Authorities

- 12.40 In North Yorkshire efforts directed at landscape enhancement have been site specific and not necessarily related to an overall concept. For instance local parks and country parks are managed by the local authorities and the landscape within them is maintained to a high standard. Outside these specific areas the County Council has operated in the following ways:

- (i) Tree Planting: Limited schemes of tree planting with a current budget of £3,000 on land outside the National Park. Sites have been selected on their merits and area policies have not so far been developed.
- (ii) Management Agreements: The National Park Committees have entered into formal and informal management agreements with private landowners in order to secure National Park objectives.
- (iii) Upland Management Projects: Within both National Parks, schemes are being developed to help farmers to make good the damage resulting from visitor pressure. Financial assistance is given in order that the work carried out is completed in such a way that the landscape will not be impaired.
- (iv) Land Acquisition: As an alternative to land management agreements it is possible for a local authority to acquire land in order to further a landscape objective. This power has been used sparingly and has been confined to particularly sensitive areas within the National Park e.g. Levisham Moor.
- (v) Roadsides: It has been recognised that certain roadside verges are of ecological interest and these are managed by the County Surveyor in such a way that the interest is maintained.
- (vi) Urban Conservation: It is recognised that many of the small towns and villages add interest to the landscape and local authorities spending has been concentrated in such historic settlements.

- (vii) Managing Smallholdings: The Agricultural Committee owns a number of smallholdings scattered throughout the County which are leased to tenant farmers. These are operated on an informal commercial basis and no special regard is paid to landscape interests over and above that adopted by a private landowner.
- (viii) Derelict Land Clearance: Central Government now makes available 100% grants for derelict land clearance within Assisted Areas.

#### Control

- 12.41 Most proposals for new development or major changes in the use of land are referred to the local authorities for planning permission who can hence control the extension of urban features into the countryside. For instance a Local Planning Authority can control the erection of farm buildings over a certain size. However, the ability to control such developments is limited to buildings greater than 455 sq. metres in area (provided certain conditions are fulfilled). These smaller buildings can nevertheless, have a significant impact on the landscape.

#### Persuasion

- 12.42 The persuasive role of local authorities in conservation falls into two separate areas - formal and informal. In the formal sphere many teachers have an interest in rural affairs and the introduction of environmental education into the curriculum is encouraging. Moreover the Education Committee through its outdoor training centres gives certain pupils an awareness of the difficulties and problems operating in the maintenance of the countryside.
- 12.43 At an informal level the local authority often acts as an arbitrator between the "conservationists" and a developer. In such situations the local authority finds itself doing a double persuasive act, attempting to bring the operators policies and public opinion towards each other in an environmental compromise.

#### The Private Sector

- 12.44 During the past forty or so years non-agricultural users of the countryside have asserted with increasing vigour their own views as to how it should be managed. Meanwhile local authorities have limited powers of control and have concentrated efforts in seeking environmental compromises in those most visually attractive areas.

#### The Agricultural Interest

- 12.45 The agricultural interest wishes to ensure that Britain becomes more self sufficient in food. Agricultural land should therefore be preserved from loss to other uses and the agricultural industry encouraged to become more intensive.
- 12.46 In the context of upland areas, the claims of farmers to the exclusive use of land have been challenged and the principle of multiple use has begun to be accepted. In the future attention is also likely to focus on the lowlands reflecting the desire to provide more informal recreational facilities close to towns where the agricultural industry's ability to have full regard for landscape conservation is restricted by the high level of capital input and the need to make the most effective use of investment. The views of the agricultural interests are mainly voiced through the Country Landowners Association and the National Farmers Union. On the other hand a variety of amenity and recreation groups from the

local to the national levels often seek stricter controls over the operations of farmers and greater access to the countryside.

- 12.47 North Yorkshire is fortunate, however, in that the farming communities have an interest in the landscape and this is significant since it is the decision of individual landowners which have such an impact on the scene. However although farmers might be interested in landscape maintenance and aware of the ecological dangers of some farm practices, individually they may feel unable to reverse current farming trends without satisfactory financial recompense from government sources.

#### The Private Woodland Owner

- 12.48 The private woodlands are a valuable landscape feature for, unlike much of the Forestry Commission's plantations, they comprise a significant proportion of broad leaved trees. Forestry is a long term investment with the greater part of the capital commitment occurring in the first five years and recouped only after maybe eighty years. Consequently, although private forestry is assisted by public funds through the Dedicated Woodlands Scheme, it must also be backed by another enterprise to meet the long term investment. For this reason forestry has been associated with the large estates whose economics can be markedly affected by changes in fiscal policy. In this context the Capital Transfer Tax (CTT) has proved of grave concern and is operating as a disincentive to new afforestation although some relief is available under Schedule 9 of the Finance Act, 1975. As a consequence of this discouragement forestry will be forced to practice in a manner which is expedient in the short term and sparing in management costs resulting in unattractive woodland. For example CTT will encourage the harvesting of tree crops within the span of one lifetime through such practices as premature felling and short rotations of softwoods which will not contribute to landscape enhancement.

#### Private Developers

- 12.49 A great range of operations have a marked impact on the landscape and eyesores, dereliction and pollution occur to varying degrees throughout the county. The activity which causes the most severe impact in the landscape is mineral extraction and this occurs both within and outside the National Parks. Dereliction of land and buildings also occurs in the landscape in sections of the County. Each visual intrusion requires a different treatment and action is required by the landowners to secure improvements.

#### The General Public

- 12.50 Sometimes public opinion is expressed through pressure groups and in the recreational context the role of the Ramblers Association, the Caravan and Camping Clubs and the Angling Clubs have been particularly noteworthy. Not all forms of recreation facilities have landscape consequences but many outdoor pursuits are more enjoyable in attractive countryside. However, caravan and chalet sites have been developed, particularly on the coast, which have had a marked impact on the landscape.

12.68 By contrast, the area of rough pasture and grassmoor has increased in many areas such as Widderdale and the fringes of the moors. Quite extensive areas, often lying at over 500', which were previously improved and enclosed, have reverted to rough pasture and grassmoor. Often farm buildings in these marginal areas now lie derelict.

## B. GREEN BELTS

### THE GREEN BELT CONCEPT

12.69 The green belt is an amalgam of two ideas:-

- (i) Containment of urban growth
- (ii) Protection of open countryside and provision of leisure facilities in the vicinity of towns.

12.70 Prior to 1955 application of green belt policy outside the Greater London area was minimal. In that year planning authorities were advised to reconsider their policies and to make proposals for more clearly defined green belts. Circular 42/55 drew attention to the need for green belts in order:-

- (i) to check the further growth of a large built-up area-
- (ii) to prevent neighbouring towns from merging; or
- (iii) to preserve the special character of a town.

12.71 It thus concentrated almost exclusively on the containment of urban growth rather than upon countryside factors. Since then the statutory expression of green belt policy has been seen as a long term, even permanent, mechanism for regulating urban growth. To achieve this there is an implicit assumption that the means involve rigorous protection of the countryside, limitations on non-essential uses of land and avoidance of the creation of surplus development potential.

12.72 The demands of an increasingly mobile and aspirant society cast doubt upon the continued success of this 'negative' approach. Circular 42/55 did not mention the positive opportunities relating to access and outdoor recreation. In practice these have emerged since 1955 as increasingly significant factors and have been instrumental in focussing attention on urban margins as a zone of land use conflict. The problems of farming in the urban fringe are a symptom of the increasing difficulty of surrounding growing towns with undisturbed farmland.

12.73 The green belt as a concept has stood the test of time remarkably well and has gained a wide measure of public support and understanding. However, it would be surprising if changes within society were not reflected in attitudes towards implementation of green belt policy. At a time when urban expansion is beginning to become less demanding than in the period of rapid growth and redevelopment in the 1950's and 1960's increasing attention is being paid to the positive aspects of green belts.

12.74 During the 1960's central government began to relate the role of green belts more closely to the wider considerations of regional planning, particularly in making comprehensive provision for future population and employment growth. While this did not necessitate relaxation of control it widened the scope of green belt definition. Some areas of overgenerous designation were seen as 'soft' areas suitable for building development while the remaining or even extended 'hard' areas were to receive continued protection for the long term future. This approach was later explored in the Yorkshire and Humberside region

where a study of green belts was undertaken in the early 1970's. Rather than rigidly preserving the existing settlement pattern through negative controls, green belts thus became seen as green backcloths to urban sub-regions, being used to implement regional policy by channelling growth in selected directions. It can be concluded that the precise form of any green belt should be related to the general form and long term development of urban regions.

#### GREEN BELTS IN NORTH YORKSHIRE

- 12.75 The County contains the whole and part of two green belts related to the West Yorkshire conurbation and the City of York respectively. Green belts have never been designated or proposed elsewhere in the County.
- 12.76 In the north the North York Moors National Park continues into Cleveland County, having a boundary in close proximity to the built-up area. Within Cleveland a number of small 'green wedges' are maintained which are designed to act as a buffer zone and provide for certain types of recreation.

#### West Riding Green Belt

- 12.77 About 800 square miles have been defined within the South Yorkshire and West Yorkshire Metropolitan counties and within the Craven, Harrogate and Selby Districts of North Yorkshire (Fig. 12.6). The purposes have been "to prevent the various cities and towns from coalescing, and secondly to girdle the conurbation as a whole". (1) Submissions were made at different times by different authorities as a part of the development plan process. Approval has similarly been piecemeal so that the status of different parts of the green belt varies, even though planning authorities have been authorised to apply suitably restrictive policies in all parts pending formal approval.
- 12.78 The two main peripheral parts of the 'girdle' lying within North Yorkshire consist almost entirely of approved green belt but display markedly different characteristics.
- 12.79 About 30 square miles in the western part of Selby District (Fig. 12.7) is predominantly an area of high grade agricultural land utilised mainly for arable farming. The landscape is flat or gently undulating. Apart from the presence of a number of areas of woodland and parkland much of it lacks natural features although the impact of industrial and other land uses is most marked.
- 12.80 The southern part of Harrogate District (Fig. 12.8) also contains about 30 square miles of green belt, including two small areas within the boundaries of the Ilkley Town Map and the Otley Town Map which are of interim status pending confirmation or variation through the structure plans in the region. The area consists of predominantly Grade 3 agricultural land utilised for a mixture of arable and pastoral farming. It lies to the north of the River Wharfe and skirts the southern and eastern sides of Harrogate to form a wedge between the built up area and nearby Knaresborough. The purpose of this wedge is principally to prevent coalescence of the two settlements and thereby to preserve their special characters. It contains several tracts of very attractive landscape which, at its western extremity, abuts the Yorkshire Dales National Park.

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(1) The Green Belts. Ministry of Housing and Local Government.  
HMSO, 1962

- 12.81 A small area of approved green belt is also located in the south of Craven District in Glusburn and Sutton parishes. This consists mainly of low grade agricultural land on the Pennine moors rising to a height of about 350m (1,000 ft.).

#### The York Area

- 12.82 Plans prepared by the former planning authorities for a green belt encircling York have never been approved. Proposals by the North and West Riding County Councils were shelved until a comprehensive study of urban land needs in the Greater York area had been undertaken. Proposals drawn up by the East Riding County Council which became dependent upon Development Plan amendments relating to the area of York University were never formally submitted. However, general planning policies which implement the concept have been applied for a number of years over an area extending from Strensall in the north to Acaster Halbis in the south and from Askham Bryan in the west to Dunnington in the east (Fig. 12.9). The area includes part of Harrogate, Ryedale and Selby Districts and is contiguous to fingers of stray land<sup>(1)</sup> within the City of York. The inner edge of the sketch green belt was defined to exclude certain areas of 'white land' on the immediate fringe of the City, which represented possible development areas at some future date. In addition the proposed growth villages of Bishopthorpe, Dunnington, Haxby and Wigginton and their environs were excluded. Revised green belt proposals by the North Riding County Council in 1973, in connection with the proposed re-submission of the Flaxton Town Map also excluded the settlements of Strensall and Skelton from the green belt. These revised proposals were subsequently adopted by the North Yorkshire County Council as an interim planning policy pending their re-appraisal as part of the Structure Plan.
- 12.83 The concept of a green belt around York has, in the past, been regarded as a clear cut case of the application of the stated green belt objectives to contain urban growth and to protect the special character of a town. Planning administration prior to 1974 was, however, diverse and not conducive to treatment of the Greater York area as a whole. Not only were four separate planning authorities involved but two separate regions of central government administration also had an interest. This situation was undoubtedly a contributory factor in the decision not to formally approve the green belt prior to local government reorganisation.
- 12.84 In practice it appears that the problems of green belt policy around York have been created largely by the fact that it has been designed as a restrictive collar, to restrict development rather than to regulate it and direct it away from areas which, for a variety of reasons, should be maintained as open space. This has tended to produce an oppressive environment, to reduce the capability of providing sufficient open space within the urban area and to engender ill-feeling towards the rural community.

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(1) The strays around York comprise 320 hectares (800 acres) of open land which is mainly under grass. The strays are the residue of more extensive areas of common land over which the Freeman of York held long established grazing rights. Since 1947 the local authority has taken over the control and management of the strays for the benefit of the local community.

12.85 In Harrogate this situation has not arisen to the same extent. The extensive open spaces within the town provide considerable opportunity for a wide variety of recreation and the central area has considerable capacity for growth and renewal. In addition neither Harrogate nor Knaresborough are restricted by the application of a total green belt collar and therefore have room to expand.

#### LAND USE IN GREEN BELTS

12.86 The object of including land in a Green Belt is to retain its open appearance. Government advice thus stresses that approval should not generally be given to development involving new building or changes of use which would infringe this. Appropriate uses have been taken to include agriculture, sport and recreation, institutions standing in extensive grounds or other special cases. Except for these types of development there has been a clear presumption against new building and intensification of existing uses, although every case is of course treated on its merits and the appeals procedure has produced a number of cases where the Secretary of State has allowed development to take place in green belts in various parts of the country.

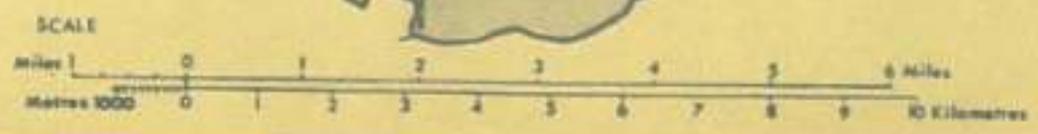
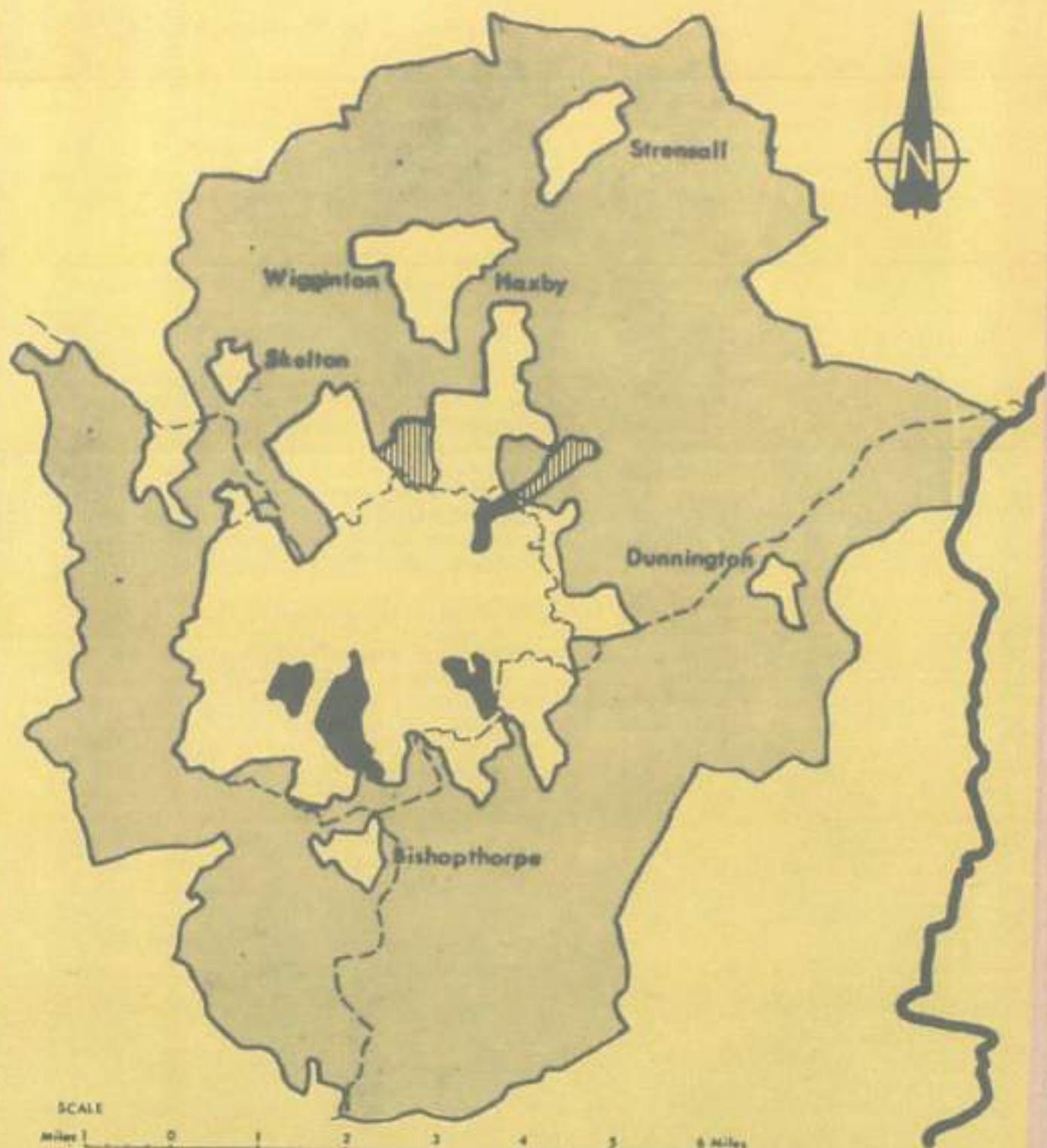
12.87 In practice other types of urban related development have also had to be accepted in urban belts. Inevitably on the fringes of towns communication corridors and public utilities tend to be more concentrated. Natural resource based or noxious uses also tend to seek sites in such locations, although some of these need not affect the open character of the countryside in visual terms. The following sections examine the more significant land uses.

#### Green Belt Policy and Agriculture

12.88 Agriculture is the dominant land user in green belts. In the York green belt 87% of the area is devoted to farming, about three quarters of it arable. The North Yorkshire sectors of the West Riding Green Belt are also dominated by agriculture although the arable proportion is twice as high in the Selby District sector as in the Harrogate District sector.

12.89 It is commonly assumed that the protective nature of green belt policy is in the best interests of agriculture. No doubt within designated areas this is often so, but in a wider sense the assumption is open to question. Definition of green belt areas is currently related to urban and landscape characteristics rather than to the needs of agriculture.

12.90 However, farming in urban fringe areas is often subject to disturbance which imposes constraints upon management practice and in this respect the definition of the inner boundaries of green belts may be an important factor. General examination of 'white cushion' areas to provide capacity for urban expansion is of less interest to agriculture than the precise definition of boundaries. If these follow physical divides (e.g. rivers, main roads, railways) the risk of disturbance can be minimised. However, it must be acknowledged that the impact of urbanisation upon farming is often at its worst in green belts, resulting in trespass, damage to fences, gates, crops and machinery, dumping of rubbish, worrying of livestock, poaching, arson and land acquisition for urban-related development. As a result farmers may choose to alter their pattern of cropping or livestock grazing.



-  Green belt ('Sketch Plan' Status)
-  Stray land within York City boundary
-  Stray land outside York City boundary
-  District boundaries
-  County boundary

**YORK AREA GREEN BELT AND STRAYS**

Figure 12.9

R. COOPER-KENYON  
 COUNTY PLANNING OFFICER  
 NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL  
 COUNTY HALL  
 NORTHALLERTON

#### Green Belt Policy and Forestry

- 12.91 Forestry is a minority land use in North Yorkshire green belts. Only 6% of the Harrogate and Selby District sectors of the West Riding Green Belt is devoted to woodland. In the belt around York the figure is only 3%. These small proportions are determined by soil quality, topography and the settlement pattern and reflect both land values and economic potential. As a planning tool for protecting, promoting or generally influencing forestry the green belt, therefore, has little effect.

#### Green Belt Policy and Minerals

- 12.92 Mineral extraction is an activity which in principle has been treated as inevitable in green belts. The cost of aggregates to serve urban markets is very sensitive to transport distance and the areas nearest to towns tend to be the first to be exploited. Although the effects of mineral workings can be deleterious over long periods of time there is an increasing emphasis on restoration and planned after-use. In terms of green belt policy there may thus be no permanent loss of the generally open character of the countryside around towns. More positive minerals and countryside policies tend to be more relevant to the question than the narrowly based green belt approach. Mineral extraction rarely conflicts with the need for urban containment.

#### Green Belt Policy and Utility Services

- 12.93 Development of utility services, including roads and railways tends to be closely related to urban needs. Sites near towns, sometimes in the green belt tend to be sought for refuse disposal, electricity sub-stations, sewage works and other uses which cannot usually be accommodated within built up areas. In addition the distribution networks of some services such as electricity and the construction or improvement of new roads tend to have a disproportionate effect on green belts. Severance, disturbance and wayleave restrictions have an influence on farming, while collectively such developments tend to have a visual impact on the landscape. Such uses have to be accepted in green belts in the interests of urban areas.

#### Green Belt Policy and Landscape

- 12.94 The restrictive nature of green belt policy has been instrumental in preserving the open nature of the countryside, even though it has had little influence upon many aspects of landscape change. Landscape quality in green belts varies as is the case in the countryside generally, but because of the concentration of urban-related development such areas tend to have many detractors. Agriculture too may alter the open character of green belts through intensive farming methods which may give rise to large farm buildings and waste disposal problems, thus increasing the possibility of conflict between profitable agriculture and attractive countryside. Green belt designation draws attention to specific areas within the context of the countryside as a whole and may give particular focus to certain countryside policies. In themselves, however, they confer few particular advantages for landscape improvement.

## Green Belt Policy and Recreation

- 95 Development for sport and recreation is deemed to be acceptable in green belts. Extensive land uses such as sports grounds or golf courses tend to retain the open character of the countryside and be in-keeping with green belt objectives. However, green belt status does nothing to promote recreational use despite the fact that the origins of the concept expressly included this idea. It is the demand for recreation in the countryside which above all has prompted the increased attention which is now paid to 'positive' use of the green belt. So far this has not been reflected in government policy although the Countryside Commission's stated criteria draw attention to green belts and urban fringes as priority areas for the development of country parks and other facilities. Clearly such an approach needs to be set within the wider context of countryside policy, also embracing protection of more inaccessible areas, but in view of energy costs and declining rural bus services increasing emphasis on green belt areas seems likely. As things stand green belt policy does not actively serve local authority efforts to improve access or invest in recreational facilities.

### THE YORKSHIRE AND HUMBERSIDE JOINT GREEN BELT STUDY

- 12.96 The Government in its reply to the 1970 Regional Strategy of the Yorkshire and Humberside Economic Planning Council asked that a review of green belts throughout the region should be undertaken. Such a review was seen to be helpful to structure plan authorities but was not intended to affect policies and decisions for the time being. The reply stressed that local authorities should continue to examine development proposals in green belt areas very critically and draw attention to the large area of the West Riding Green Belt which had already been approved.
- 12.97 In 1972 the Regional Economic Planning Council and the Standing Conference of Local Planning Authorities instituted a joint study with the following terms of reference:
- "To state, on a regional basis, the principles which should underlie the choice and use of land as Green Belts, having regard to the future economic and social well-being of the region and its environment".
- 12.98 The study suggested that a detailed review of green belts is part of the local authority planning process and therefore concluded by stressing the need for positive measures of conservation and enhancement and by indicating policy options which are available in the region. Of course the North Riding sector of the informal green belt around York was excluded from this review, since the study related to the former regional boundaries, although it did comment upon the general problem of planning comprehensively for the York area as a whole.
- 12.99 The review stresses the need to strike a balance between town and countryside policy. It includes an assessment of the likely long term demand for land for urban development in West and South Yorkshire Metropolitan Counties. This is estimated to total 33,000 hectares (81,000 acres) by the end of the century, of which 7,700 hectares (19,000 acres) would be needed before 1981. However it would now appear that these estimates require to be modified since rates of urban growth may prove to be rather lower than those assumed.

- 12.100 In discussing agricultural, minerals, recreation, landscape and other countryside policies the review points out that 'green belt status does nothing to bring about effective recreational use or the improvement of visual appearance of the countryside'. A need was recognised for more positive development of green belt areas, especially their more derelict or degraded parts. For this reason the function of green belt policy in Yorkshire and Humberside was seen to be regulation of the size and shape of towns in order to prevent uncontrolled growth and to preserve easy access to open country, rather than simply constraining the growth of urban areas.
- 12.101 However it was felt that the West Riding green belt is 'more extensive than it needs to be' and covers large areas of land which could be adequately protected by other policies.
- 12.102 The review concludes with a discussion of future options for green belt policy and attempts to establish revised principles based upon the functions which designated green belt land is serving. The aims of green belt policy as set out in Circular 42/55 are seen to be fulfilled but in addition it was concluded that green belt designation is also used in part to protect farmland, high quality landscape areas and upland areas in use for recreation and hill farming. It was suggested that these should not form the basis of green belt designation since other powers exist which are more appropriate for the purposes.
- 12.103 It is concluded that a more selective approach is required concentrating upon the definite roles of defined tracts of open country and attempting to establish appropriate planning and management functions for them without subsuming secondary functions through the guise of a green belt.
- 12.104 The demand for urban development was considered to be capable of being met by only three basic options:
- (i) Avoiding the green belt by building only in the already urbanised and 'white land' areas not included in the green belt.
  - (ii) Avoiding the green belt by developing new or expanding existing communities beyond the outer boundary of the green belt.
  - (iii) Developing some of the land currently safeguarded as green belt (paragraph 7.12).

#### Implications of the Study for North Yorkshire

- 12.105 Since the study related to former regional boundaries and concentrated almost exclusively upon the approved West Riding Green Belt, it is debatable whether it really should carry much force in North Yorkshire. However the spirit of the study is acknowledged and if review is to be undertaken elsewhere in the region then the areas of green belt within the County should be scrutinised.
- 12.106 After a proving period of 20 years the green belt has stood the test of time remarkably well. Re-examination undoubtedly directs attention towards a more positive role. As a planning tool aiming to guide the size and location of development rather than simply check it the green belt will therefore continue to be treated as an important statutory measure.

- 12.107 As a result of pressure for development and a possible shift of emphasis away from general urban containment it is the inner areas of green belts which are most open to review. In the case of the West Riding Green Belt this need not imply change in North Yorkshire. On the other hand the consequences of rigid adherence to existing boundaries would be unduly high densities of development in towns or an accelerated rate of development spilling over beyond the green belt to other areas. There is some evidence of this in housing trends in Selby District. Clearly therefore the question of urban containment has developmental consequences for North Yorkshire within the regional context.
- 12.108 The role of green belts as a device to prevent neighbouring towns merging into each other has fewer consequences for the County. This role draws attention to retaining narrow physical green wedges between built up areas, bearing in mind the economic and social identity of towns. It thus seems to be a matter of primary concern for the metropolitan counties although clearly applies to the Harrogate/Knaresborough area.
- 12.109 The role of the green belt in preserving the special character of a town appears to be a valid and continuing concept entirely in sympathy with the proposed revised guidelines laid down by the study. There is an obvious interest in this role in the County, particularly around York where the "special character" is indisputable. However it may equally be relevant for protecting the character of small rural settlements, including market towns. Green belt policy in the York area should not be treated simply as a matter of tight containment. The special character requiring protection is largely situated in the historic core yet the green belt applies to the town as a whole. It is not a direct solution to the problems of the core. Indeed it may run counter to conservation policy if the latter seeks to relieve pressure on historic centres by encouraging dispersal. Solution of some of the problems of the historic core may well require a wider view of development opportunities and open space provision within the city, particularly in relation to green wedges which penetrate towards the historic core. The options put forward in the study carry different implications for the County. These are discussed in turn with an emphasis upon the recommendation to develop some land currently enjoying green belt designation.

Avoiding the green belt by building only in the already urbanised and white land areas

- 12.110 This option depends on there being sufficient non-designated land available in suitable locations. Undoubtedly it carries great acceptance and could delay the time when incursions into the green belt may be necessitated. Indeed such an approach is already built into the review of the West Riding County Development Plan where it is stated that:

"In order to keep amendment of the Green Belt boundaries to a minimum, the inner boundary of the Belt has been defined to leave unallocated certain areas of land between the Green Belt and the development proposals in the plan; these areas may later be allocated to meet demands for development beyond the present period of the Plan."

- 12.111 Adoption of this approach in the West Riding Green Belt perhaps has little direct bearing on North Yorkshire since the remaining undeveloped land between the built-up areas and the green belt mostly lies within the metropolitan counties and few of the 'windows' within the green belt lie within the County. The exceptions are Follifoot, Kirkby Overblow and Sicklinghall in Harrogate District and Brotherton, Shorburn in Elmet and South Milford in Selby District for which inset maps have been prepared. The option perhaps has more relevance to the York area where a substantial 'white cushion' was left unallocated when the green belt proposals were drawn up. It must be decided whether its retention conforms with the concept of using the green belt to protect the special character of the area.

Avoiding the green belt by developing new or expanded communities beyond the green belt

- 12.112 This approach has characterised green belt policy in the Home Counties. It has not so far been adopted in the Yorkshire and Humberside Region. A change in this approach would of course carry considerable implications for North Yorkshire. Already an Outline Land Use Strategy for the Selby area prepared by the former planning authority has been reviewed and its generous provisions revised downwards to be more in keeping with local need(1). To be successful this option would require the deliberate stimulation of growth in communities beyond travel to work distance from existing towns and implies a balanced supply of population and jobs. The chances of achieving this in a period of low population growth seem remote. Without the jobs the rate of development would be slow and might tend to favour higher income groups who could withstand the costs of long distance commuting but even here uncertainty over the costs of energy may be a modifying factor. At a time when government policy discriminates in favour of Development Areas and New Towns the prospects of achieving such an approach related to the West Riding Green Belt seem remote. During the plan period it is not therefore expected that North Yorkshire will have to face this challenge. However, in the case of the York Green Belt it is possible that urban pressures unable to be satisfied within the urban

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(1) Selby Review Study, County Planning Officer 1975

area will 'leap frog' over the protected area and threaten more distant open land.

Developing some of the land currently safeguarded as green belt

- 12.113 The study put particular emphasis on this possibility. Inevitably such an option draws attention to the urban fringes of green belt land and seems to lead to a notional classification of such land into inner and outer areas. The former would presumably consist of a search area for development land. The latter, while not entirely immune from change, would be largely inviolable.
- 12.114 Since the emphasis would be on the urban margins it is felt that the option would not produce a fundamental effect upon the County. The green belt around York and Harrogate would need to be examined in this light, but it is felt that the areas under regional review in the West Riding Green Belt would be largely outside the County. The structure plan could thus be free to adopt its own approach to the areas of green belt within the County.

#### THE GREEN BELT IN REGIONAL, STRUCTURE AND LOCAL PLANS

- 12.115 The framework of formal plans presents the main opportunity to express policy on the existing and evolving role of green belts. Through the preparation and review of these plans it is possible both to confirm the originally conceived purposes of green belts and to develop their more detailed functions in up to date terms.
- 12.116 The strategic guidance of development, particularly housing and employment growth remains the main purpose of green belts. They are a simple proven instrument which can serve both the encouragement of development in certain directions and the containment of growth elsewhere. In this way they can ensure that continuous and indiscriminate urban sprawl is avoided and that development pressures are met selectively.
- 12.117 A second strategic purpose of green belts is to guide policies for the provision of certain types of recreation facilities. Demand for both resource orientated facilities and some large land consuming user orientated facilities is particularly intensive on the edges of built-up areas. Provision for open air recreation in these areas, a priority recognised by the Countryside Commission, may serve to divert some demand from more distant places, including national parks and intensively used farmland and at the same time lead to some landscape improvement.
- 12.118 In addition green belts also serve to give form to environmental planning policies by adding weight to the protection of threatened countryside. Appeal decisions and day to day control of development illustrate that the application of green belt policies at local level is not always clear cut. Nevertheless the environmental principles involved remain valid. These relate mainly to:-

- (i) the maintenance of the open appearance of the landscape by restricting building to a minimum;
- (ii) a cautious attitude to the intensification of land uses which may give rise to the need for further development;
- (iii) the improvement and enhancement of under-used areas;
- (iv) encouragement of countryside land uses.

#### The Regional Strategy Review(1) and the Green Belt

12.119 The Review drew attention to the Joint Green Belt Study which took account of some of the above points and restated the main conclusions as follows:-

- "(a) that the first principle of Green Belt policy in Yorkshire and Humberside should not be (as it had been until now) 'to check the growth of large built up areas' but rather 'to regulate their size and shape in order to prevent uncontrolled growth and to preserve easy access to open country and outdoor recreation in pleasant surroundings;
- (b) Green Belt policy should be more closely linked to open space policies in towns;
- (c) more of the Green Belt should be used for positive environmental and amenity purposes;
- (d) land should not be allocated for Green Belt where there are more appropriate policies for controlling development."

The Review reiterates the Secretary of State's endorsement of the recommendation that planning authorities should review green belts in the course of preparing structure plans.

#### C. THE QUILT ENVIRONMENT

12.120 The varied history of the county is fully represented in a heritage of historic buildings the most important of which relate to prehistoric archaeology, monastic remains, medieval castles and 18th Century country houses.

12.121 Of particular importance, however, is the quality of vernacular architecture and tradition. Several distinctive vernacular traditions are represented in the county as a whole reflecting the variety of natural topography and geology throughout the area.

#### The Yorkshire Dales

12.122 Predominantly rolling plateau country, broken by deep river valleys and modified by the Ice Age, the Dales nevertheless comprise a variety of scenery including the limestone cliff and scar scenery in the west, the terraced scenery of the alternating sandstone, shales and limestone of the north, and the younger 'border' of millstone grit country to the east. The area has provided an abundance of building stone. Limestone, sandstone and grits have all been used, with glacial boulders adding a surprising variety in some areas. The Dales contain some of the finest examples of vernacular architecture, most of which dates from the great period of rural building in the 17th century, when new prosperity brought a demand for a more substantial and commodious form of building constructed of local stone with thick walls and heavy stone slate roofs. Other features include stone mullioned windows, carved and/or initialled doorheads, and 'throughs', i.e. long transverse stones placed at intervals along one course in every four or five to hold together thick rubble walls.

(1) The Next Ten Years. Yorkshire and Humberside Regional Strategy Review. HMSO 1976.

# ANNEXE II ii

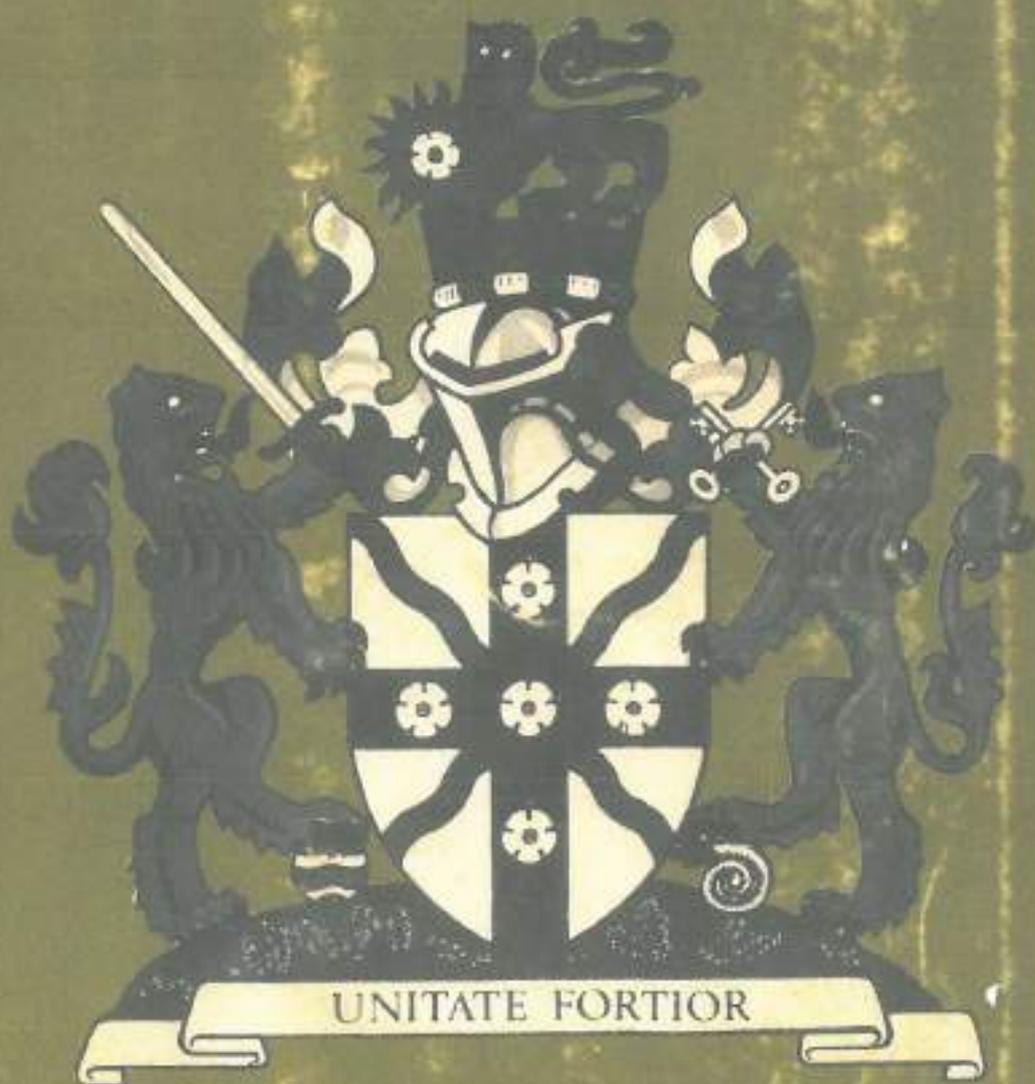
NYCSP 1979

WRITTEN STATEMENT

SUBMISSION VERSION

county structure plan

# written statement



north yorkshire county council

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## PART B GREEN BELTS

- 11.14 North Yorkshire contains part of the outer fringe of the West Yorkshire Green Belt. Most of it is approved although parts of it have only interim status. The purposes of this Green Belt have been defined as, firstly, "to prevent the various cities and towns from coalescing" and, secondly, "to girdle the conurbation as a whole" (1). The Green Belt covers an area of about 600 square miles, mostly in South and West Yorkshire, although small areas overlap into the Craven, Harrogate and Selby Districts of North Yorkshire.
- 11.15 Plans prepared by the former planning authorities for a Green Belt around York have not received statutory approval although they have been accepted as having interim or "sketch plan" status. General planning policies which implement the concept have been applied for a number of years within the defined area which includes those parts of Harrogate, Ryedale and Selby Districts lying adjacent to the City of York and small areas of land within the City itself. The Green Belt reflects one of the stated purposes of Circular 42/55 in seeking to protect the special character of the City by containing its urban growth and preventing its coalescence with settlements in the surrounding area.
- 11.16 While smaller in scale than those arising in the areas adjoining West Yorkshire, growth demands in the parts of north Hambleton readily accessible from Cleveland reflect similar trends and processes. In recent years, employment growth in Cleveland and major improvements to the A19 have been instrumental in putting Stokesley, Great Ayton and other settlements under pressure for housing development. No Green Belt exists in this area although, in North Yorkshire terms, the area can be compared directly with the West Yorkshire fringe where such policies are successfully applied.

### National and Regional Policies

- 11.17 Since 1955, government has drawn attention to the importance of checking the unrestricted expansion of built-up areas and of safeguarding areas of countryside between towns. Circular 42/55(2) advises planning authorities to consider the establishment of Green Belts, wherever desirable, in order to:-

- (i) check the further growth of large built-up areas;
- (ii) prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another; and
- (iii) preserve the special character of a town.

- 11.18 Although government advice stresses that Green Belt is an urban-related concept, there is a tendency to regard it also as a tool of rural conservation. The benefits to agriculture and the environment are secondary and incidental to the main purpose but have tended to be the foundation of much of the support for Green Belts. In practice, Green Belt policies cannot justifiably be invoked in support of rural land use, conservation and management policies although, over time, greater attention is being paid to such 'positive' planning in Green Belt areas. The Countryside Commission, for instance, regards urban fringe areas generally, and Green Belts specifically, as having a measure of priority for recreational provision.

- 11.19 One recent example of the reconsideration of the role of Green Belts was the Joint Green Belt Study carried out by the Regional Economic Planning Council and published in 1974. While finding the basic approach of Circular 42/55 to be still valid, the Study sought to extend the role of the Green Belts in Yorkshire and Humberside (which at that time excluded the northern part of the County). It recommended that their function should be to regulate the size and shape of towns, in order to prevent uncontrolled growth and to provide easy access to open country. This goes further than simply constraining the growth of urban areas. Local authorities were recommended, in preparing their Structure Plans, to review the Green Belt in accordance with the principles established in the Study. The Study reiterated that protection of agriculture and the environment was best achieved by other powers and policies rather than by Green Belt. The conclusions of the Study were embodied in the Review of the Regional Strategy in 1975 and eventually endorsed in the Government Response in 1977.

### Issues

- 11.20 During the initial stage of consultations and public participation in 1975, many respondents attached great importance to the need to protect the character and appearance of the countryside and to restrict the rate of urban growth in fringe areas of the County adjoining West and South Yorkshire and Cleveland. Without referring to Green Belt as such, they broadly endorsed the type of protection which such designation can afford to areas which are subjected to extensive pressure for development.
- 11.21 Technical studies and surveys also highlighted Green Belt matters, identifying a need to resolve the future role of the existing West Yorkshire and York Green Belts and pointing to the potential for introducing new Green Belt policies in the northern part of the County.

### Policy Choices

- 11.22 Chapter 3 describes how the Structure Plan has evolved from consideration of policy choices in various fields. The alternative approaches to Green Belt policy described in these choices are summarised below:-

Theme A The existing Green Belts around the City of York and in those fringe areas of the County adjoining West Yorkshire would have been retained but some Green Belt land on the fringes of built-up areas would have been released to accommodate urban development. No new Green Belt areas would have been established.

Theme B Existing Green Belt areas would have been extended and new areas designated in the northern part of the County adjoining Cleveland. Green Belt land on the fringes of built-up areas would not normally have been released for the purposes of urban development.

Theme C Green Belt controls would have been substantially relaxed in areas where economic potential could be realised. No new Green Belts would have been designated.

Theme D No new Green Belts would have been designated and present Green Belt controls around the City of York and in areas adjoining West Yorkshire would have been removed.

(1) The Green Belts, Ministry of Housing and Local Government 1962.

(2) Circular 42/55, Green Belts, Ministry of Housing and Local Government 1955.

Theme E Existing Green Belt areas would continue to have been protected but policies within those areas would have been modified in order to accommodate some development resulting from urban pressures and the needs of rural communities and land uses. Similar policies would have been adopted in the fringe areas of the County adjoining Cleveland.

- 11.23 Consultations and public participation confirmed the widespread support for continuing existing Green Belt designations. Only a small minority of respondents suggested that Green Belts should be abolished. There was marginally less support for extended Green Belts, although such a policy was considered more favourably in Harrogate and Selby Districts which would be most affected by any such extensions. Support for extensions to existing Green Belts was increased when they were considered as part of a strategy based on conservation and restraint.

#### Draft Plan

- 11.24 The Draft Plan included policies which confirmed and carried forward the existing Green Belts around the City of York and in fringe areas of the County adjoining West and South Yorkshire and proposed their extension. In the light of pressures for urban development in the northern fringe areas of the County adjoining Cleveland, it proposed a new area of Green Belt within Hambleton and Richmondshire Districts.
- 11.25 Most of the comments received during the subsequent period of consultation and public participation endorsed the Green Belt policies described in the Draft Plan. Richmondshire District Council, however, felt that the designation of part of the District as Green Belt was inappropriate and unnecessary and that restraint on development pressures could be achieved by the natural capacity of villages to accommodate new development. The policy has been amended to reduce the area of proposed Green Belt in the northern part of the County. Other amendments seek to clarify the extent of the strategic interest in Green Belts and introduce new policies designed to provide guidance on the appropriate scale and location of development within Green Belt areas.

#### Strategy for Green Belts

- 11.26 Green Belt emerges as a well established and readily accepted principle capable of enjoying a high degree of permanence. It is appropriate that it should be carried forward, extended as required and used as part of the general Structure Plan strategy. A basic aim of this strategy is to slow down the pace of population and housing growth. Since this mainly stems from the in-migration of population, especially from adjacent counties, it is inevitable that the greatest pressure occurs in the fringe areas of North Yorkshire easily accessible from Cleveland, County Durham, South Yorkshire and West Yorkshire. These areas contain important rural resources and many villages and small towns whose character would be significantly affected by continued development, leading to progressive loss of countryside between settlements and the merging of communities.
- 11.27 The designation of Green Belts in North Yorkshire will support the strategy of restraint, assist the aims of structure plans in adjacent counties whose policies seek to maintain population levels, and provide a framework for management studies. In the York area, the desire to protect the special character of the City remains. While this can largely be achieved by promoting a compact form of development, it will be necessary to provide for development land on the fringes if the application of Green Belt policy is not to have the paradoxical effect of prejudicing conservation by preventing relocation of environmentally damaging land uses from historic areas.

#### Implementation

- 11.28 Green Belt policy will be implemented through the day to day control of development and given greater definition through local plans. It is proposed that a Green Belt Subject Plan be prepared. Through this medium, it is intended to co-ordinate revisions to Green Belt boundaries and to develop strategic policy further in order to assist local plans which would be expected to define the boundaries of inset settlements.

## Policies for Green Belts

### POLICY E8

THREE AREAS OF GREEN BELT WILL BE DEFINED IN NORTH YORKSHIRE:-

AREAS ADJOINING THE COUNTY BOUNDARY WITH WEST YORKSHIRE AND SOUTH YORKSHIRE INCLUDING:

- (i) AN AREA TO THE SOUTH OF SKIPTON EXTENDING SOME TWO MILES FROM THE COUNTY BOUNDARY IN CRAVEN DISTRICT;
- (ii) THE SOUTHERN PART OF HARROGATE DISTRICT EXTENDING SOME TWO MILES TO THE NORTH OF HARROGATE AND KNARESBOROUGH, BUT EXCLUDING THE BUILT-UP AREA OF THESE TOWNS, AND EASTWARDS TOWARDS THE RIVER OUSE; AND
- (iii) THE WESTERN PART OF SELBY DISTRICT EXTENDING EASTWARDS FROM THE EXISTING GREEN BELT TOWARDS THE RIVER OUSE AND THE RIVER WHARFE.

AREAS ADJOINING THE COUNTY BOUNDARY WITH CLEVELAND AND DURHAM WITHIN THE NORTHERN PART OF HAMBLETON DISTRICT OUTSIDE THE NORTH YORK MOORS NATIONAL PARK, EXTENDING SOME NINE MILES SOUTH FROM THE COUNTY BOUNDARY.

AREAS WITHIN AND ADJOINING THE CITY OF YORK, EXTENDING TO A DISTANCE OF SOME SIX MILES FROM THE CITY CENTRE WITHIN HAMBLETON, HARROGATE, RYEDALE AND SELBY DISTRICTS TO MEET THE WESTERN EXTENSION OF THE WEST YORKSHIRE FRINGE GREEN BELT IN HARROGATE AND SELBY DISTRICTS.

#### Justification for Policy E8

1. The formal and informal Green Belt policies which have operated for many years in the area around the West Yorkshire conurbation and around York have had considerable success in influencing the pattern of development and providing a clear guide to potential developers. They have enjoyed considerable support and this was re-emphasised in the formative stages of this initial Structure Plan. There is a need to continue with existing designations and to confirm those which, at the moment, are non-statutory.
2. Bearing in mind the broad strategy of reducing the pace and scale of development in North Yorkshire and applying strong environmental policies, extension of Green Belt areas is clearly required. The opportunity has been taken to review the present position and to propose new areas of Green Belt in the areas of the County which have experienced the greatest growth of residential development.
3. As indicated in Chapters 4 and 5, residential and industrial land needs will be provided for mainly within the broad confines of existing settlements. Green Belt policies therefore support the general intentions of Policies H5 and E3 in controlling development in some of the most accessible parts of the County. While Green Belt is an urban-related concept and will contribute to the promotion of compact urban development and the avoidance of sprawl, policy application will contribute to the preservation of agricultural land and environmental quality.
4. Green Belt designation has been viewed mainly from the North Yorkshire standpoint and the extensions reflect the review of development in the Selby, Harrogate/Knaresborough and north Hambleton areas and the irregular pattern of the informal Green Belt around York. However, it cannot be viewed in isolation from the policies in adjacent counties, notably Cleveland, South Yorkshire and West Yorkshire. It is considered that Green Belt designation will assist the realisation of the Structure Plan policies of these counties and form part of wider sub-regional planning strategies.
5. Where Green Belt designation in adjacent counties extends to their boundary with North Yorkshire, there is a mutual need for consistent and logical rounding-off of boundaries irrespective of administrative areas.
6. The Government response to the Regional Strategy Review stressed the value of Green Belt, advised the avoidance of ad-hoc erosion and envisaged the definition of a "new belt which provides a strong and comprehensive pattern of guidance".(1)
7. The extent of the Green Belt is shown on the Key Diagram but in order to provide more explicit guidance it is intended to develop this general statement of principle in local plans.
8. There is widespread public support for the present Green Belt. The abolition of Green Belts is a minority view. The prospect of extensions was considered favourably, notably in Harrogate and Selby Districts, especially when considered in the context of a potential strategy of conservation and restraint.

### POLICY E9

PLANNING PERMISSION WITHIN GREEN BELT AREAS WILL NORMALLY BE GRANTED ONLY FOR THE ERECTION OF NEW BUILDINGS OR FOR THE CHANGE OF USE OR REDEVELOPMENT OF EXISTING BUILDINGS WHICH ARE NECESSARY IN CONNECTION WITH THE FOLLOWING LAND USES:-

- (i) AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY;
- (ii) OUTDOOR SPORT AND RECREATION;
- (iii) CEMETERIES OR INSTITUTIONS STANDING IN EXTENSIVE GROUNDS; AND
- (iv) OTHER USES APPROPRIATE IN A RURAL AREA.

(1) Regional Strategy Review: Government Response 1977

#### Justification for Policy E9

1. The application of Green Belt policy is not intended to restrict essential development. Locally generated requirements for housing and industry will generally be permitted within or, where necessary, adjoining settlements. Outside settlements the advice of Circular 42/85 will be followed, permitting appropriate development to take place. However, a purpose of Green Belt policy is to restrict building for industrial or commercial purposes which might, through a need for labour, lead to a demand for the construction of more houses. The reasonable requirements of existing concerns will need to be met.
2. The appearance of villages and the countryside is a basic component of the North Yorkshire environment whose protection can be assisted by consistent application of Green Belt policies. Isolated development often detracts from the appearance of the countryside and is costly to provide with services.
3. The policy will help to minimise the loss of agricultural land and, by giving confidence that farmland will be protected, encourage new investment in urban fringe areas.
4. The type and intensity of recreational development permitted will depend on the location within the Green Belt and upon local site factors but appropriate sport and recreational uses should not be excluded from Green Belts on principle.
5. Some institutions require large sites which cannot usually be accommodated in towns. Where buildings stand in large grounds, especially where adaptation to new uses could enhance their appearance and that of their setting, such development is to be encouraged.

#### POLICY E10

THE FURTHER EXPANSION OF SETTLEMENTS WITHIN GREEN BELTS WILL NORMALLY NOT BE ALLOWED EXCEPT THROUGH MINOR INFILLING. WHERE ADDITIONAL DEVELOPMENT IS TO BE ALLOWED, SETTLEMENTS WILL BE INSET IN THE GREEN BELT AND POLICY E9 WILL NOT APPLY.

#### Justification for Policy E10

1. Significant expansion of Green Belt settlements requires public sector investment in services and facilities and can produce road traffic problems. In a time of limited resources and rising costs of private travel, land use policies should encourage full use of existing assets but not unnecessarily promote dispersed forms of development.
2. This policy should be read together with Policy E12. Green Belt policies seek to restrict the expansion of settlements to the minimum consistent with the reasonable needs of local people. Taken together with the housing guidelines (Policy H2) and the exclusions introduced by Policy E12, this policy provides a framework for the distribution of development and the investment programmes of public authorities.
3. Villages in areas of the County most accessible from large employment centres require specific protection if they are not to be swamped by development. The policy provides either for their inclusion in Green Belt, where there would be a general presumption against further development, or their treatment as an 'inset' village where local plans may determine that Green Belt policy should not apply. It does not imply an artificial ban on development but seeks to provide the basis for planning the size and shape of settlements against a background of firm policy.

#### POLICY E11

THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA WILL BE USED TO DETERMINE WHICH SETTLEMENTS OUTSIDE THE HARROGATE, KNARESBOROUGH AND YORK AREAS ARE TO BE EXCLUDED FROM THE GREEN BELT:-

- (i) THEIR SUITABILITY FOR ACCOMMODATING SMALL GROUPS OF HOUSES; OR
- (ii) THE EXTENT OF EXISTING PLANNING PERMISSIONS FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT; AND
- (iii) THE AMOUNT OF SPARE CAPACITY IN PUBLIC UTILITIES THAT COULD BE USED ECONOMICALLY; AND
- (iv) THE AVAILABILITY OF SHOPS AND PRIMARY EDUCATION FACILITIES.

#### Justification for Policy E11

1. This policy is a refinement of Policy E10 and is intended to provide guidelines for local plans, which will identify 'inset' villages within Green Belt areas. While allowing for some further development, the Green Belt will be drawn tightly round these villages.
2. Taken together with the housing guidelines (Policy H2), this policy provides a framework for the distribution of development and the investment programmes of public authorities.
3. Even if it were desirable, it would be impracticable to make a fresh start and to include all settlements in a given area within a defined Green Belt. To be realistic, it is accepted that some villages are suitable for accommodating small groups of houses and that some are already committed to a substantial amount of new housing. Such factors will be material considerations in defining 'insets'. While spare capacity in public utilities is not, in itself, a justification for future development, it is expected to influence the choice of 'inset' villages in the same way as the availability of other services, notably shops and primary schools.
4. Establishing criteria for the purposes of determining which villages are to be excluded from Green Belt designation will enable a balanced approach to planning in Green Belt areas to evolve. It would defeat the object of designation if all settlements were excluded. Consequently, a selective approach is sought whereby the most appropriate settlements will be identified.
5. Criteria for the definition of areas to be excluded from the York Green Belt are defined in Policy YP.19.

**POLICY E12**  
WITHIN SETTLEMENTS EXCLUDED FROM THE GREEN BELT, RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT WILL NORMALLY BE PERMITTED ONLY WHERE IT WOULD:-

- (i) NOT CONFLICT WITH THE MAXIMUM LEVEL OF GROWTH FOR THE PARTICULAR SUB-AREA WITHIN WHICH THE SETTLEMENT IS SITUATED;
- (ii) BE WELL RELATED TO THE EXISTING FORM AND SCALE OF THE SETTLEMENT AND WOULD NOT SPOIL ITS CHARACTER; AND
- (iii) BE OF A SCALE AND DESIGN APPROPRIATE TO THE NEEDS OF PEOPLE LIVING IN THE AREA AND WOULD CONSTITUTE EITHER INFILLING OR ROUNDING-OFF OF THE EXISTING BUILT-UP AREA OR RESTORATION/CONVERSION OF AN EXISTING BUILDING.

**Justification for Policy E12**

1. Taken together with the housing guidelines (Policy H2), this policy provides a framework for the distribution of development and the investment programmes of public authorities.
2. Continuous or substantial development would gradually alter the character of small towns and villages. Peripheral expansion tends to be poorly related to the form of settlements and at a distance from services and facilities. Therefore, while there may be scope for further development, the Green Belt will be drawn tightly round excluded settlements.
3. Small groups of houses may be needed from time to time to meet local requirements. These will be accommodated where they do not detract from the character of a settlement. The policy does not seek to stop development but to restrain it while meeting all reasonable local needs.

# ANNEXE II *ij*

NYCSP 1980

SoS DECISION LETTER 26.11.1980



Departments of the Environment and Transport  
~~Department of the Environment~~  
Yorkshire and Humberside Region  
City House Leeds LS1 4JD  
Telephone 0532-38232 ext. 300

From the  
Regional Director

The Chief Executive and Clerk of the County Council  
North Yorkshire County Council  
County Hall  
NORTHALLEERTON  
North Yorkshire  
DL7 8AD

Your Reference:  
EC/SL CP.37/B

Our Reference:  
YH/5069/324/11P

26 November 1980

Sir

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1971 (AS AMENDED)  
NORTH YORKSHIRE STRUCTURE PLAN

1. I am directed by the Secretary of State for the Environment to say that, having considered objections, including objections to modifications, and representations and the Panel's Report of the Examination in Public (EIP) held in March 1980, he has today approved the above-named Structure Plan with modifications. The modified Plan is enclosed.
2. The Secretary of State's approval of the Plan relates to the Council's planning context, and the policies and general proposals for the development and other use of land in the area covered by the Plan, and takes into account their relationship to policies and general proposals for the development and other use of land in neighbouring areas which may be expected to affect that area. The approved planning context is contained in Chapter 2 of the Plan, and the approved policies and general proposals are distinguished in capital letters in Chapters 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 of the modified Plan.
3. The Secretary of State has taken note of the reasoned justification, which is not included in the approved written statement. To the extent that he considered appropriate, he has set out below his reasons for approving or modifying the land use policies and general proposals formulated in the Plan.
4. In considering the Structure Plan, the Secretary of State has had regard in particular to the relationship of the Plan's policies and general proposals to national and established regional policies and the policies of neighbouring planning authorities; to the reconciliation of any conflicts between the individual policies and general proposals of the Plan; and to the resolution of matters of substantial controversy.

MODIFICATIONS

GENERAL

5.1 MODIFICATION:

The Secretary of State has modified the written statement by deleting

material set out in capital letters (in the Plan as submitted) which does not appear to constitute acceptable policies or general proposals in respect of the development or other use of land. He has also modified the written statement by deleting policies and general proposals set out in capital letters (in the Plan as submitted) which are in his view inappropriate to a Structure Plan because of the level of detail which they import into the Plan; because they relate to matters which are not of structural importance; because they merely advocate action by other bodies; or because they relate to matters which are for decision by Central Government in another context. He has also modified the written statement in order to express more appropriately or to clarify the wording of policies and general proposals which seem to him to be inappropriately expressed in the Plan as submitted.

- 5.2 The Town and Country Planning (Structure and Local Plans) Regulations 1974 require that the County Council's policies and general proposals, which under section 7(3)(a) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1971 should relate to the development and other use of land in the area covered by the Plan, should be readily distinguishable from the other contents of the written statement. In the North Yorkshire Structure Plan as submitted the policies and general proposals that relate to these matters are distinguished in capital letters in Chapters 4 to 12 inclusive.
- 5.3 However, some of the material printed in capital letters (in the Plan as submitted) does not appear to constitute acceptable policies or general proposals in respect of the development or other use of land, and this has therefore been deleted. The Panel found that some of the policies were unduly restrictive and detailed. The Secretary of State accepts most of the Panel's findings in this respect and has made a number of modifications to the Plan to give effect to them.
- 5.4 The Secretary of State has also deleted some policies which are not of structural significance, and removed other material he considers inappropriate for distinguishing in capital letters; for example, statements of objective, statements advocating action by Central Government or by third parties who are not planning authorities.
- 5.5 Additionally, a number of policies and general proposals in the Plan as submitted have been modified to clarify their meaning or to express them in terms more appropriate to a structure plan.

#### HOUSING

##### 6.1 MODIFICATION

The Secretary of State has modified Policies H1, H2, H3 and H6 to remove excessive detail from the Plan; to increase the provision of land for housing in the County; and to state the policies more clearly and concisely. He has also deleted references to local needs from Policies H2 and H7 and rephrased the latter to bring it into line with the priorities set out in DOE Circular 9/80.

6.2 Policy H1 as submitted set a ceiling of 39,000 new dwellings to be built in

the County between 1977 to 1991. At the EIP the County Council proposed that this figure should be increased to a maximum of 40,900 dwellings. Policy H2 proposed to allocate this total amongst 24 sub-areas of the County. At the EIP the County Council claimed that the restrictions on new house building in the County were in accordance with the structure plans of the neighbouring counties of West Yorkshire and Cleveland, and would provide sufficient housing both for the needs of local people and for a reasonable number of in-migrants. The House Builders' Federation argued, however, that a substantially higher ceiling would be required to meet future housing demand. Most of the new housing would be in the private sector.

6.3 The Panel found that the County Council's calculations of total housing requirements were at the bottom of the range of housing need, whereas the calculations of the House Builders' Federation and other participants were at the top of the range. The Panel recommended that a middle figure of 46,000 (including 10,900 for Selby District) should be adopted, because too severe a restriction on new housing would tend to drive up house prices, to the detriment of local residents and in-comers alike, and could affect the provision of new job opportunities in some parts of the County.

6.4 The Secretary of State is anxious that structure plans should not include policies which would restrict opportunities for increasing home ownership, and he shares the Panel's concern about the effects which the restrictions proposed in the Plan as submitted would have both on the availability of housing in some parts of the County and on house prices. As regards the 10,900 dwellings proposed by the Panel for the Selby District, the Secretary of State recognises that the scope for industrial development - particularly in the southern part of the District - may give rise to a higher demand for housing, while account has to be taken of the full range of housing demand - direct and indirect - which the major new coalfield may generate. The Secretary of State, while recognising that the District contains much good quality agricultural land which must be safeguarded as far as possible, believes that it is right to make generous provision for housing for the District; but in the light of objections received to his published modifications he considers that the figure proposed by the Panel was too high and he has reduced it to 9,300. He recognises that this figure would be within the capacity of the building industry and acceptable to the Selby District Council. Overall, the Secretary of State broadly approves the main objective of the housing policies in the Plan of reducing inward migration into the County; and he considers that the moderate increase for the County as a whole of up to 44,100 new dwellings in the period 1977 to 1991 should not accelerate migration from West Yorkshire or Cleveland, while the provision of house building land on this scale should help to restrain house price increases in the County. He also commends to the County Council the Panel's recommendation that the housing supply and demand in the County should be monitored and reviewed by 1983.

- 6.5 At the EIP District Councils argued that the Structure Plan's proposals in Policy H2 to allocate housing to 24 sub-areas would result in undue rigidity and local shortages in sub-areas. On the other hand, the County Council claimed that an indication of the scale of housing provision in the various parts of the eight Districts in the County was an important function of the Structure Plan in giving guidance to District Councils in the preparation of their local plans.
- 6.6 The Panel concluded that the system of sub-area allocations for housing would in fact be too rigid and that greater flexibility was needed. The Secretary of State broadly agrees with the Panel and notes that the published modification proposing the deletion of sub-area housing allocations was accepted by most District Councils. He has therefore deleted Policies H1 and H2 and substituted a revised Policy H1 making provision for up to 44,100 new dwellings in the County in the period up to 1991, with a breakdown of this figure to the eight Districts only, and has added a requirement that most of the new housing should be mainly in and around the main urban areas, main towns and small towns.
- 6.7 Policy H3 as submitted proposed four criteria for designating service villages and identified such villages. At the EIP, some District Councils and the representatives of the two National Park Committees in the County resisted this proposal on the grounds that it was for them to designate such villages.
- 6.8 The Panel recommended that the sense of Policy H3 and its criteria should be accepted, but that the actual naming of villages should be left to the District Councils in consultation with the County Council. The Secretary of State generally welcomes measures which help to prevent rural depopulation and to retain the character and functions of rural communities. He has therefore approved the intent of Policy H3, and, subject to minor modification, the criteria by which service villages will be selected; but he has deleted references to particular villages. Villages will be designated in local plans.
- 6.9 As regards the proposal in Policies H4 and H7 as submitted that the ownership of new houses in the County should be restricted as far as possible to local residents, the Secretary of State agrees with the Panel that these proposals are unrealistic; and he has deleted this restriction from Policies H4 and H7.
- 6.10 The Secretary of State has also accepted a modification suggested by the County Council to Policy H6 advocating that priority for new housing development should be given to vacant and derelict sites in existing settlements.
- 6.11 The Secretary of State also considers that Policy H7 as submitted did not fully reflect the priorities for maintaining a reserve of land for house building which are set out in DOE Circular 9/80. He has therefore modified Policy H7 accordingly.

## INDUSTRY AND OFFICES

### 7.1 MODIFICATION:

The Secretary of State has deleted Policies I1 and I2; modified Policy I3 to simplify the County Council's industrial policies and to delete the concept of Employment Priority Areas; and has modified Policy I5 to increase substantially the provision of land for industry in each District. He has also modified Policy I12 to accept the increased limits suggested by the County Council on the growth of service employment in Harrogate and Scarborough and, as slightly modified, in York.

7.2 The Panel recommended that Policy I1 as submitted should be combined with Policy I4 for simplicity. The Secretary of State considers, however, that the wording proposed by the Panel does not amount to a significant policy statement appropriate to a structure plan and he has deleted Policy I1.

7.3 Policy I3 as submitted provided for the establishment of Employment Priority Areas where priority would be given to increasing the number and type of job opportunities through the development of land and buildings. The Panel found that the policy was seriously defective because it failed clearly to identify the places to be given the priority; because it did not fit in with the national policy of keeping Assisted Area status after 1982 for Scarborough and Richmondshire only; and because it did not state what benefits the proposed designation would afford. The Panel recommended that the policy should be deleted and the sense of it incorporated in a revised policy including elements of Policies I2 and I3.

7.4 The Secretary of State recognises that there is a need to balance the protection of the amenities of the National Parks with the provision of sufficient numbers of job opportunities to help to stem rural depopulation and to preserve the character of the settlements in the Parks. The Structure Plan should also give priority to the Richmondshire and Scarborough Districts which will retain Intermediate Area status for the purposes of receiving regional industrial assistance from the Government. The Secretary of State agrees with the Panel that Policy I3 as submitted failed to make clear what benefits the designation of Employment Priority Areas would afford. He has therefore modified the policy broadly on the lines recommended by the Panel.

7.5 Policy I5 as submitted proposed the provision of 228 hectares of land for industry in the County split among the eight Districts but, before the EIP began, the County Council suggested increasing the amounts of land for industry in each District except York and Selby. Most of the District Councils accepted these revised allocations, but Hambleton, Richmondshire and Selby wanted their allocations increased. The Panel recommended that the changes suggested by the County Council should be approved subject to the figures for Hambleton and Richmondshire being increased to 30 ha each. The Secretary of State has generally accepted the Panel's recommendations.

7.6 Policy II2 as submitted proposed that provision for service sector jobs in the York area should be restricted to 7,000, in Harrogate to 2,500 and in Scarborough to 900. Before the EIP, the County Council suggested a modification to alter the figures to 4,400; 3,900; and 2,100 respectively. The District Councils concerned generally accepted the revised figures, and the Panel recommended that they be approved, apart from raising the York area figure to 5,500.

7.7 The Secretary of State broadly accepts the Panel's recommendations and has modified the Policy accordingly. He is anxious that structure plan policies should not unduly restrict the growth of service sector employment - particularly in areas like York and Scarborough which are heavily dependent on the holiday and tourist industry. He also recognises the potential for growth of office employment in Harrogate District.

#### TRANSPORT

##### 8.1 MODIFICATION:

The Secretary of State has modified Policy T1 to state the purpose of the policy more clearly and to re-allocate the roads included in the primary road network into two categories. He has also modified Policy T7 to delete references to a specific date for commencing the road schemes listed in the Policy; included a new Policy T7A specifying the road schemes which the Department of Transport intend to commence in the County; modified Policy T9 to provide a single coherent car parking policy and deleted Policy T5 in consequence; and modified Policies T11, T13, T14, T15 and T20 to combine them into a single industrial transport policy.

8.2 Policy T1 as submitted provided for 3 main categories of major roads on which traffic would be concentrated. The Secretary of State considers, however, that there is no need for separate priority categories for motorways and trunk roads, and he has combined these. He has also combined principal County roads (Class A) and the selected Class B roads listed in the policy as a separate second priority category. The Secretary of State agrees with the Panel that it is not practicable to concentrate traffic, as proposed by the Plan, as submitted, on the primary road network and he has modified Policy T1 to relate it to the allocation of resources and to traffic regulation.

8.3 Policy T7 as submitted designated a number of "key routes" in the County and listed eleven major road schemes on those routes on which construction would start in the period to 1991. At the EIP the policy was criticised because it did not appear to take sufficient account of the Department of Transport's intention to publish orders for the extension of the M1 to the east of Leeds, and because of doubts about the availability of the funds needed to build the 11 road schemes.

8.4 The Secretary of State agrees broadly with these criticisms and has modified the Plan to remove commencement dates and to make it clear that the schemes in the policy should not be regarded as being in any order of priority. He agrees that the

routes listed in Policy T7 are important strategic routes whose improvement would help to implement the Plan's main policies; and he expects the County Council to proceed with the schemes as and when resources permit, having full regard to the Department of Transport's intention to publish orders for the extension of the M1 to the east of Leeds.

8.5 The Secretary of State has also inserted a new Policy T7a setting out proposals for the improvement of the County's strategic road network to be made by the new trunk roads or improvements listed in the White Paper: Policy for Roads: England 1980 (Cmd 7908).

8.6 The Secretary of State has also combined, for simplicity, Policy T9, which deals with parking in towns, with Policy T5, covering parking at railway stations and has combined Policies T11, T13, T14, T15 and T20 into a single policy for the benefit of transport operators and developers.

#### MINERALS

##### 9.1 MODIFICATION:

The Secretary of State has modified all the mineral policies (Policies M1 to M6) to make them consistent with national policies towards mineral extraction; to remove unduly restrictive policies; and to simplify and clarify them. He has also expressed more clearly the County's role as an important supplier of minerals in the north of England.

9.2 North Yorkshire makes an important contribution to the supply of minerals to much of the north of England. At the EIP, the representatives of adjoining County Councils expressed concern about the effect which the mineral policies in the North Yorkshire Plan as submitted might have on the availability of minerals from North Yorkshire. Although the North Yorkshire County Council accepted that the production and supply of these minerals would have to continue for the foreseeable future, others claimed that the restrictive nature of all the mineral policies in the Plan would, in practice, substantially reduce the amount of minerals exported from North Yorkshire in future years. The policies would also inhibit new development from taking place, and could reduce the number of jobs available in some small areas of the County. On the other hand, the County Council argued that restrictions were necessary if attractive areas in the County, in which most of the minerals were located, were not to be despoiled. Paragraph 9.1 of the Plan as submitted indicated the balance which the County Council sought between environmental safeguards, economic needs for the mineral and the commercial security of operators.

9.3 The Secretary of State agrees with the aims of the County Council as set out in paragraph 9.1, but he accepts the Panel's view that the policies in the Plan as submitted did not reflect fully the County Council's intentions. He has therefore accepted the Panel's recommendation that the Plan should state clearly the role of North Yorkshire in the provision of minerals and has modified Policy M1 accordingly. He has also modified Policies M1 and M2 to help to achieve a better balance between mineral exploitation and environmental conservation.

9.4 Policy M3 as submitted included a strong presumption against any further extraction of coal by underground mining unless the extraction was in the national interest and the applicant was prepared to enter into legal agreements with the local planning authority. The policy also banned the disposal of colliery waste on the surface unless for the purposes of restoring derelict land or improving agricultural land. The Secretary of State considers that the terms of this policy as submitted are generally too restrictive. He considers that applications for the extraction of coal should be considered against the same general criteria as for other minerals. He has therefore modified Policy M3 to that effect, and deleted the requirement that surface tipping of waste will be permitted only in the circumstances described in the policy as submitted.

9.5 Policy M4 as submitted proposed the establishment of Mineral Consultation Zones where other forms of development would be restricted. The Panel saw no need for the formal delineation of such zones and recommended that the policy should simply require District Councils to consult with the County Council about the delineation of these zones where this was considered necessary. The Secretary of State agrees that formal delineation of mineral consultation areas is unnecessary, and he has deleted this requirement from Policy M4.

9.6 Policy M5 deals with the restoration of land following mineral workings. The Panel recommended that the policy should be deleted and replaced by one more directly stating the Council's intentions and omitting criterion (iii), which they considered to be too restrictive and incapable of implementation. The Secretary of State generally supports the policy's aim of returning land worked for minerals to agricultural use wherever possible, but he agrees that the policy as submitted is too restrictive. He has therefore modified Policy M5 to simplify and clarify it.

#### ENVIRONMENT

##### 10.1 MODIFICATION:

The Secretary of State has modified Policy E3 to identify the green belts in the County more clearly and added a new Policy E3a stating the criteria to be used in defining their boundaries. He has also modified Policy E10 and deleted Policy E11 so as to simplify the criteria for the designation of inset settlements in the green belts.

10.2 The Plan as submitted proposed (Policy E3) to add to the existing green belts in North Yorkshire parts of the Skipton, Harrogate, Selby and York areas, and a new green belt extending 9 miles south from part of the northern County boundary. The Panel found that the case for extending the green belts in the County had not been made, and recommended that the existing green belt areas in the County, where the policies were being applied, should be confirmed as green belt in the Structure Plan, subject to some minor tidying up, and to extension of the green belt round York in a westerly direction.

10.3 The Secretary of State broadly agrees with the Panel's recommendations and has modified Policy E3 accordingly. Much of the County is protected against development by other policies for the protection of the environment and good quality agricultural land. The Secretary of State believes that the degree of protection afforded by these policies is more than adequate to safeguard the many amenity areas in North Yorkshire and he is anxious that the green belt concept should not be devalued by indiscriminate application, or by using green belt notation where other means of development control in rural areas would more appropriately serve the required purpose. The Secretary of State has also inserted a new Policy E3a setting out the criteria to be used in determining the boundaries of the green belts in local plans. This reflects both the provisions of MHEG Circular 42/55 and of the Joint Green Belt Study for Yorkshire and Humberside.

10.4 Policies E10 and E11 as submitted set out the criteria to be used in determining which settlements outside the main built-up areas in the County are to be excluded from the green belt. At the EIP the County Council suggested a substantial re-wording of Policy E10 but the Panel considered that the two policies should be replaced by a single coherent policy. The Secretary of State agrees and has therefore modified Policy E10 and deleted Policy E11.

#### YORK INSET AREA

##### 11.1 MODIFICATION:

The Secretary of State has deleted Policies YP1 to YP22 in Chapter 12 of the written statement.

11.2 The County Council argued at the EIP that it was necessary to include a separate section on the planning of the York area; because this was the largest concentration of population in the whole County; because the solutions to many of the problems of York District were to be found in four adjacent Districts; because there was a need for an overall view of the planning of the whole area; and because the unique character of the historic city meant that it had to have some special policies which were not of general application throughout the County. The District Councils recognised the value of a co-ordinated approach to the planning of the whole area. The Panel found, however, that many of the 22YP policies in the York Inset Area chapter duplicated, in whole or in part, other policies in the main body of the Structure Plan and saw no need for repeating them in a separate section; and they considered that the remaining YP policies were more appropriate to local plans than to a structure plan.

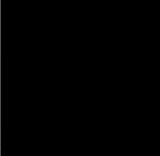
11.3 The Secretary of State notes the advice given to the County Council in 1978 by the Regional Economic Planning Board that separate chapters on the planning of York, Harrogate and Scarborough should be deleted from the draft Structure Plan on the grounds that they were too detailed and were more appropriate as briefs for local plans. He agrees with the Panel that, to the extent that the policies in that section do not duplicate other Structure Plan policies, they tend to be of a nature which interferes unduly with the duties and responsibilities of the District Councils, or are not related to strategic land use planning. He notes, too, that only one of the

five District Councils in the area has objected to the proposed deletion of the separate policies for the York Inset Area; and that the Panel made no recommendation on the separate allocation of housing and industrial land in each district adjacent to York. Moreover, any such allocations would have to take account of the substantial changes made in District housing and industrial land totals in Policies H1 and I5 from those in the Plan as submitted. For these reasons, the Secretary of State has deleted from the Plan Policies YP1 to YP22 inclusive; but he shares the Panel's view that the location of future development in the area needs to be further considered and he wishes the County Council and the District Councils to consult one another and the Regional Office of the Department of the Environment with a view to producing by 31 December 1981 firm proposals for the location of future housing and industrial development in the area.

#### CONCLUSIONS

12. The Secretary of State's approval of the Structure Plan is without prejudice to the consideration of detailed proposals in local plans. Some objections to the Structure Plan related to proposals which have been deleted by way of modification because they were too detailed to be considered at the structural level.
13. The Structure Plan shall become operative on 26 December 1980.
14. By virtue of Section 20 of the 1971 Act, this notice of approval of the Structure Plan forms part of the Development Plan for the County of North Yorkshire.
15. It should be clearly understood that the Secretary of State's approval of the Structure Plan does not convey approval for other statutory purposes. In particular, it does not commit the Department of the Environment or any other Government Department to the payment of grant on any particular project or to the amount or timing of any capital expenditure programme.
16. A list of the modifications which the Secretary of State has made to the Plan is set out in the Appendix to this letter for information.

I am Sir  
Your obedient Servant

  
J W BLOWS  
Acting Regional Director

# ANNEXE II iv

NYCSP APPROVED  
VERSION MARCH 1981

# NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY STRUCTURE PLAN

North Yorkshire  
County Council



NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

0143

COUNTY STRUCTURE PLAN

WRITTEN STATEMENT

(Approved by the Secretary of State for the Environment November 1980)

North Yorkshire County Council  
March 1981

339

## PREFACE

(This page does not form part of the approved Plan)

The North Yorkshire Structure Plan was submitted to the Secretary of State for the Environment on 12 October 1979 and approved by him, with modifications, on 26 November 1980. The Plan became operative on 26 December 1980.

The Secretary of State's approval relates to only a limited part of the submitted Plan, consisting of the planning context contained in Chapter 2 of this document, the list of modified policies forming Chapter 3, and the modified Key Diagram. The reasoned justifications supporting the policies submitted by the County Council have been taken into account by the Secretary of State but do not form part of the approved Plan. Together with those remaining parts of the submitted Written Statement dealing with District and National Park summaries; forecasts and assumptions; the Selby Coalfield; resource appraisal and monitoring they may be consulted in, or purchased from, the County Planning Department, County Hall, Northallerton.

The County Council is required to publish the North Yorkshire Structure Plan as approved by the Secretary of State and has, therefore, produced this document. As a result of the deletion of certain submitted policies, the policy numbers in Chapter 3 are not consecutive. Since the Plan was submitted there have also been a number of alterations to the Government's national and regional policies and to the position on adjacent Structure Plans set out in Chapter 2.

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**POLICY E8**

THE NORTH YORKSHIRE GREEN BELTS WILL CONSIST OF :

- (i) A BAND FROM 1 TO 5 MILES WIDE ALONG THE COUNTY'S SOUTHERN BOUNDARY, FROM THE BOUNDARY OF THE YORKSHIRE DALES NATIONAL PARK TO WEST OF WETHERBY;
- (ii) A STRIP BETWEEN HARROGATE AND KNARESBOROUGH;
- (iii) A BAND SOME 4 MILES WIDE ALONG THE WESTERN BOUNDARY OF SELBY DISTRICT, FROM WEST OF TADCASTER TO THE BOUNDARY WITH SOUTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY.

THESE GREEN BELTS WILL BROADLY INCLUDE THOSE AREAS PREVIOUSLY APPROVED BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE AS GREEN BELT (SOME ON AN INTERIM BASIS) WITH THE ADDITION OF A SMALL AREA SOUTH OF BALNE MOOR:

- (iv) A BELT WHOSE OUTER EDGE IS ABOUT 6 MILES FROM YORK CITY CENTRE.

**POLICY E8a**

IN DEFINING THE PRECISE BOUNDARIES OF THE GREEN BELT IN LOCAL PLANS, ACCOUNT WILL BE TAKEN OF :

- (i) THE NEED TO REGULATE THE SIZE AND SHAPE OF URBAN AREAS IN ORDER TO PREVENT UNCONTROLLED GROWTH;
- (ii) THE NEED TO PREVENT THE COALESCENCE OF EXISTING SETTLEMENTS;
- (iii) THE NEED TO PRESERVE AREAS OF OPEN LAND EXTENDING INTO THE URBAN AREA FROM THE COUNTRYSIDE WHICH HAVE AN EXISTING OR POTENTIAL RECREATIONAL OR AMENITY VALUE;
- (iv) THE NEED TO PRESERVE EASY ACCESS TO OPEN COUNTRY AND OUTDOOR RECREATION IN PLEASANT SURROUNDINGS.

**POLICY E9**

PLANNING PERMISSION WITHIN GREEN BELT AREAS WILL NORMALLY BE GRANTED ONLY FOR THE ERECTION OF NEW BUILDINGS, OR FOR THE CHANGE OF USE OR REDEVELOPMENT OF EXISTING BUILDINGS WHICH ARE NECESSARY IN CONNECTION WITH THE FOLLOWING LAND USES :-

- (i) AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY;
- (ii) OUTDOOR SPORT AND RECREATION;
- (iii) CEMETERIES OR INSTITUTIONS STANDING IN EXTENSIVE GROUNDS; AND
- (iv) OTHER USES APPROPRIATE IN A RURAL AREA.

**POLICY E10**

WITHIN THE GREEN BELTS, THE EXPANSION OF SETTLEMENTS, APART FROM MINOR INFILLING, WILL NOT NORMALLY BE PERMITTED UNLESS IT SATISFIES THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA, WHEN POLICY E9 WILL NOT APPLY :-

- (i) THE DEVELOPMENT PROPOSED IS OF AN APPROPRIATE SCALE AND TYPE; AND
- (ii) THE PUBLIC UTILITIES HAVE SUFFICIENT SPARE CAPACITY; AND
- (iii) ADEQUATE SHOPS AND PRIMARY EDUCATION FACILITIES ARE AVAILABLE.

*POLICIES E11 and E12 deleted*

*POLICIES FOR THE YORK INSET AREA (YP1 to YP22) deleted*

# ANNEXE II V

ALTERATION No1.  
WRITTEN STATEMENT  
CONSULTATION DRAFT

# NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY STRUCTURE PLAN

## ALTERATION No.1 (198-)

**Consultation Copy**

North Yorkshire  
County Council



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R. Cooper Kenyon  
B.Sc FRTPI FRICS FRSA MBIM  
County Planning Officer

October 1983

YC3980282/1

PROPOSED FIRST ALTERATIONS TO THE NORTH YORKSHIRE  
COUNTY STRUCTURE PLAN

PREFACE

1. The North Yorkshire County Structure Plan was approved by the Secretary of State for the Environment in November 1980 and became operative on 26 December 1980. Its policies and proposals relate to the 14 year period 1977 to 1991 so, at the date of formal approval, the Structure Plan had effectively been operational for some 3½ years. A further 3 years have elapsed since approval. The County Council has a statutory duty to keep the provisions of the Structure Plan under review and the present national approach concentrates on the introduction of selective changes as and when these appear to be necessary in order to maintain the currency and the relevance of the proposals and policies. It is appropriate, therefore, some 6 years into the plan period, that the County Council should now seek to introduce a number of alterations to the Plan.
2. The proposed alterations reflect recent changes in the national and regional context for planning. In general terms they have regard to:-
  - i) the call for the release of land for housing to be planned in close consultation with the housebuilding industry;
  - ii) the need for development plans to reflect the priority given to national economic recovery in providing for the release of land for industrial development;
  - iii) recent changes in national policy on roads.

Since approval of the initial Plan in 1980, the County Council has participated in a review of the Regional Strategy for Yorkshire and Humberside (1). The proposed alterations are compatible with this Review.

---

(1) A New Deal for Yorkshire and Humberside: Regional Strategy Review. Yorkshire and Humberside County Councils' Association 1983.

3. Some of the alterations stem from experience of the operation of policies over the 6 year period. Others are considered to be desirable in order to bring the provisions of certain policies up to date in the light of new data available from a number of sources, including the 1981 Census of Population.
4. The justification for assembling such a 'package' of first alterations at this time stems from the Secretary of State's request, embodied in his decision letter approving the Structure Plan, that the housing supply and demand in the County should be monitored and reviewed by 1983. This was based on the recommendation of the Panel which conducted the Examination in Public of the Plan. In order to maintain an appropriate time-scale for applying strategic policies, it is proposed that the plan period is rolled forward by 5 years, to 1996, in respect of the revised provisions of Policy H1 dealing with housing growth, Policy I5 dealing with the provision of industrial land and Policies T7, T7a and T8 describing the programmes for new road construction and improvement to be implemented by the County Council and by the Department of Transport.
5. The proposed first alterations thus review and roll forward the provisions of Policies H1, I5, T7, T7a and T8 and seek to clarify or to bring up to date the intentions of Policies T2, T10, A5, E10, E11, E1, E8 and E10. The opportunity has also been taken to introduce a new policy (E12) concerned with the definition of broad areas within which most new caravan, camping and chalet developments should be located. Various amendments to the Key Diagram have been incorporated, mostly as a consequence of the above policy changes.
6. It is emphasised that the proposed changes relate only to selected policies in the Plan, the remainder of which continues to be relevant in its approved form. Interpretation of the Structure Plan in the context of Local Plans and the control of development will still require consideration of all relevant policies, including those in the approved Plan which remain unchanged.
7. Local Plans will continue to be the principal basis for assessing the local feasibility of the Structure Plan policies, particularly its land allocations. So far there has been remarkably little conflict with agricultural, environmental and other interests in seeing the Structure Plan guidelines on housing and industrial land requirements. However, it is recognised that it could become increasingly difficult in some areas to reconcile development needs with agricultural and environmental considerations. Therefore, the feedback from Local Plans and decisions on major development proposals will form a

vital part of strategic policy monitoring and could influence future Structure Plan thinking. For instance, at the moment, it would normally be appropriate to encourage desirable employment generating development proposals and perhaps the balance of planning considerations is shifting in favour of such priorities even at the expense of compromising some long held planning principles. While some flexibility is thus desirable, it should not be misinterpreted as a presumption in favour of the steady erosion of the open countryside or the historic/cultural environment. In catering for present day needs, the planning process retains a responsibility to consider the long term implications for both people and their environment.

8. In the following section of this document, each of the proposed alterations or additions to policy is described separately and compared, where applicable, with the existing approved statement of policy. Each alteration or addition is accompanied by an explanatory memorandum, which gives the County Council's reasons for making the policy alterations or addition and such background information as seems to be relevant and desirable in order to justify the changes.
9. The County Council is required to place its proposals on deposit and to secure adequate publicity for the draft policy alterations. The views of official consultees, local and regional interest groups and organisations and individuals on the amendments and additions to policy outlined in this document are therefore being sought, so that these may be taken into account by the County Council before formal proposals for alterations are submitted for the approval of the Secretary of State for the Environment.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT OF POLICY EB - GREEN BELTS

PRESENT POLICY

THE NORTH YORKSHIRE GREEN BELTS WILL CONSIST OF:

- (i) A BAND FROM 1 TO 5 MILES WIDE ALONG THE COUNTY'S SOUTHERN BOUNDARY, FROM THE BOUNDARY OF THE YORKSHIRE DALES NATIONAL PARK TO WEST OF WETHERBY;
- (ii) A STRIP BETWEEN HARROGATE AND KNARESBOROUGH;
- (iii) A BAND SOME 4 MILES WIDE ALONG THE WESTERN BOUNDARY OF SELBY DISTRICT, FROM WEST OF TADCASTER TO THE BOUNDARY WITH SOUTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY.

THESE GREEN BELTS WILL BROADLY INCLUDE THOSE AREAS PREVIOUSLY APPROVED BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE AS GREEN BELT (SOME ON AN INTERIM BASIS) WITH THE ADDITION OF A SMALL AREA SOUTH OF BALNE MOOR:

- (iv) A BELT WEDGE OUTER EDGE IS ABOUT 6 MILES FROM YORK CITY CENTRE.

PROPOSED POLICY

THE NORTH YORKSHIRE GREEN BELTS WILL CONSIST OF:

- (i) A BAND GENERALLY FROM 1 TO 5 MILES WIDE ALONG THE COUNTY'S SOUTHERN BOUNDARY, FROM THE BOUNDARY OF THE YORKSHIRE DALES NATIONAL PARK TO WEST OF WETHERBY AND EXTENDING NORTHWARDS TOWARDS THE SOUTHERN AND WESTERN BOUNDARIES OF HARROGATE;
- (ii) A STRIP BETWEEN HARROGATE AND KNARESBOROUGH;
- (iii) A BAND SOME 4 MILES WIDE ALONG THE WESTERN BOUNDARY OF SELBY DISTRICT, FROM WEST OF TADCASTER TO THE BOUNDARY WITH SOUTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY.

THESE GREEN BELTS WILL BROADLY INCLUDE THOSE AREAS PREVIOUSLY APPROVED BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE AS GREEN BELT (SOME ON AN INTERIM BASIS) WITH THE ADDITION OF A SMALL AREA SOUTH OF BALNE MOOR:

- (iv) A BELT WEDGE OUTER EDGE IS ABOUT 6 MILES FROM YORK CITY CENTRE.

YC3980282/41

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

1. The precise boundary of the West Yorkshire Green Belt in the area to the south and west of Harrogate is being reviewed in the context of the Harrogate Town Local Plan and in the light of the criteria specified in Policy EBa of the approved Structure Plan. Application of these criteria has indicated that the Green Belt should exhibit a much closer relationship with the urban area of Harrogate than is presently the case. The Local Plan therefore modifies the existing, approved boundary to bring it closer to the built-up area to the west and south of the town. The narrow strip of land separating Harrogate from Knaresborough already forms part of the approved Green Belt. Similar circumstances pertain in the area lying generally between Parnal and Harrogate and it is appropriate, therefore, that Green Belt policy should similarly be applied within this area, based on the Crimple Valley, in order to secure the objectives inherent in the criteria embodied in approved Structure Plan Policy EBa. Elsewhere, the boundary is redefined for the purposes of regulating the shape and size of the built up area and protecting the open character of areas of open land which extend into the urban area from the countryside and which have an existing or potential recreational or amenity value. These include Oak Beck Valley, Valley Gardens and Pine Woods and the area based on the Hockstone Beck.
2. The County Council considers that these proposals are justified and conform to the criteria set out in Policy EBa. The proposed amendment to Policy EB is intended to bring Structure and Local Plan policies into closer conformity.
3. It is a function of local plans to develop and interpret the provisions of the approved Structure Plan and to identify detailed, site-specific proposals. These must display a broad degree of conformity with the provisions of the Structure Plan, but may themselves provide a basis for the updating or review of strategic policy. The Green Belt proposals in the Harrogate Town Plan, insofar as they identify extensions to the existing designated area, are considered to be consistent with the provisions of approved Structure Plan Green Belt Policy EBa, which establishes the criteria upon which the precise definition of boundaries, in local plans, should be based. It is necessary, therefore, to amend Policy EB by bringing up to date the provisions of sub-paragraph (i).

Amendment of the Key Diagram

4. There is consequential need to amend the Key Diagram, in order to reflect the revised provisions of Policy EB(i) in the area to the south and west of the town of Harrogate.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT OF POLICY E10 - GREEN BELT INSETS

PRESENT POLICY

WITHIN THE GREEN BELTS, THE EXPANSION OF SETTLEMENTS, APART FROM MINOR INFILLING, WILL NOT NORMALLY BE PERMITTED UNLESS IT SATISFIES THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA, WHEN POLICY E9 WILL NOT APPLY:

- (i) THE DEVELOPMENT PROPOSED IS OF AN APPROPRIATE SCALE AND TYPE; AND
- (ii) THE PUBLIC UTILITIES HAVE SUFFICIENT SPARE CAPACITY; AND
- (iii) ADEQUATE SHOPS AND PRIMARY EDUCATION FACILITIES ARE AVAILABLE.

PROPOSED POLICY

THE EXPANSION OF SETTLEMENTS WITHIN THE GREEN BELTS, APART FROM MINOR INFILLING, WILL NOT NORMALLY BE PERMITTED. WHERE A NEED FOR EXPANSION CAN BE ESTABLISHED, THE SETTLEMENT WILL BE EXCLUDED FROM THE GREEN BELT AND THE PRECISE BOUNDARY OF THE EXTENDED SETTLEMENT DEFINED IN A LOCAL PLAN WHEN THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA WILL NEED TO BE SATISFIED:

- (i) THE DEVELOPMENT PROPOSED IS OF AN APPROPRIATE SCALE AND TYPE; AND
- (ii) THE PUBLIC UTILITIES HAVE SUFFICIENT SPARE CAPACITY; AND
- (iii) ADEQUATE SHOPS AND PRIMARY EDUCATION FACILITIES ARE AVAILABLE.

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

1. It could be argued that approved Policy E10 implies that significant expansion of any settlement located within the Green Belt will be acceptable provided that all three criteria are satisfied. This is not the correct interpretation of the policy, since such expansion would of course be contrary to Green Belt purposes.
2. Certain settlements located within the Green Belts may need to be identified for growth in the context of the development strategy embodied in a local plan. Where such settlements are identified,

- they will need to be treated as forming 'insets' to the Green Belt and the scale of development to be permitted determined by reference to the criteria in Policy E10 and to other appropriate planning policies.
- 3. The criteria embodied in Policy E10 are necessary but not exclusive conditions for identifying growth villages and the scale of growth which may be permitted therein. This important distinction is clearly stated in the proposed alteration.

# ANNEXE II Vi

NYCSP

ALTERATION No.1 1987

DECISION LETTER



From the  
Regional Director

Departments of the Environment and Transport  
Yorkshire and Humberside Region  
City House Leeds LS1 4JD  
Telephone 0532 438232 Ext 300

The Chief Executive and Clerk of the County Council  
North Yorkshire County Council  
County Hall  
NORTHALLERTON  
North Yorkshire  
DL7 8AD

CP.37SJK/HJM

YH/5069/324/25

14 January 1987

Sir

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1971 (AS AMENDED)**  
**NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY STRUCTURE PLAN**  
**ALTERATION NO 1**

1. I am directed by the Secretary of State for the Environment to say that, having considered objections, including objections to proposed modifications and representations and the panel's report of the examination in public held in October 1985, he has today approved the above-named proposals for alteration with modifications. The modified proposals for alteration as approved are enclosed.

2. The Secretary of State has taken note of the explanatory memorandum submitted by the Council giving reasons for the policies and general proposals for the development and other uses of land contained in the proposals for alteration and stating the relationship of the proposals to general proposals for the development and other use of land in neighbouring areas. The explanatory memorandum does not form part of the approved alteration.

3. In considering the proposals for alteration, the Secretary of State has had regard in particular to the relationship of the policies and general proposals to national and established regional policies and the policies of neighbouring planning authorities; to the reconciliation of any conflicts between the individual policies and general proposals of the structure plan; and to the resolution of matters of substantial controversy.

To the extent that the Secretary of State considers appropriate, he has set out below his reasons for approving or modifying the policies and general proposals submitted by the Council.

## MODIFICATIONS

### 4. GENERAL

4.1 MODIFICATION: The Secretary of State has modified Alteration No 1: "Introduction to the Structure Plan and the National and Regional Context", by removing the references to the deletion of the Introduction to the Structure Plan and of Figures 1 and 2.

4.2 The Introduction and Figures 1 and 2 of the initial Structure Plan submitted in October 1979 are not in fact part of the Plan as approved by the Secretary of State on 26 November 1980. Although the Panel found the Introduction and Figures 1 and 2 to be most helpful and recommended that, suitably amended, they be published in the altered Plan, the Secretary of State does not consider this appropriate. It is, however, for the County Council to decide whether they wish to include this material in the explanatory memorandum for the Plan as altered.

### 5. LAND FOR HOUSING

5.1 MODIFICATION: The Secretary of State has modified Alteration No 2: Policy H.1, by amending the provision for housing for both the county as a whole and for its districts; by removing the words "up to" and "up to the following totals" inserting instead "about"; and by amending the provision for the Greater York Area.

5.2 In the Alteration as submitted the County Council proposed that land should be provided for 45,800 dwellings in the county for the period 1981 to 1996. They considered that this represented a rolling forward of the provision of the approved Plan; that it had regard to the need for conservation and the environment of the county; and that it was in accordance with the strategy underlying the approved Plan that the provision of housing should be determined on grounds of policy rather than necessarily following previous trends. Nevertheless the EIP Panel looked at statistical trends and forecasts relevant to housing provision. There was no general criticism at the EIP that the provision for housing for the county as a whole was inadequate for the period intended, but representations were made by the House Builders Federation and others that the proposed provision was too low in some parts of the county. Yet others considered the intended provision to be too high in some places. At the EIP, the Panel also considered evidence about the market demand for housing; looked at the inter-relationship between North Yorkshire and neighbouring urbanised counties; considered the provision for each district in the county; and re-examined the justification for the identification of a figure for the Greater York Area.

5.3 The Panel found the continuation of the theme of the approved Plan, including a reduction in the rate of housebuilding, to be not unreasonable in principle. They

expressed concern, however, that the potential for in-migration of people to North Yorkshire was not being slowed sufficiently especially as evidence about 'headship rates', derived from the 1981 Census, indicated that households would not be formed as quickly as anticipated, and that in consequence fewer houses would be required than estimated when the Alteration was submitted to the Secretary of State. The County Council indicated that, as a result, there would be some 5,000 to 7,000 fewer households than expected, and they suggested at the EIP a revised range of figures, between 40,600 and 45,800 dwellings, which still allowed a provision up to the total in the Alteration as submitted. The Panel considered that an over-generous provision could result in damage to the environment and agriculture, and could increase the problems of neighbouring districts of West Yorkshire by attracting increased numbers of people from there to North Yorkshire and thereby hindering the regeneration of urban areas within West Yorkshire, concerns expressed at the EIP.

5.4 As for market demand, the Panel considered that this could not be precisely quantified, but they were impressed by evidence about the variety of housing markets in North Yorkshire, both by area and type of housing, and the relationship of demand to employment. The Panel concluded that the only way of allowing for the satisfaction of demand was to have regard to the calculations of housing need and to recent trends, but to allow for a measure of flexibility by taking account of the opinions and information presented at the EIP, so that district planning authorities could cater properly for the localised pattern of demand in their local plans. However, the Panel considered that the quality of environment in the county warranted restraint of unfettered market demand.

5.5 The Panel considered the provision for each district in the county and recommended that the total provision proposed for the period 1981 to 1996 should be reduced by 3,800 dwellings to 42,000 which they regarded as providing sufficient flexibility and support for home ownership policies. Taking account of the circumstances in each district, the Panel considered that the provision for Selby District should be reduced by 800 dwellings, for Harrogate and Ryedale Districts by 600 dwellings each, for Craven, Richmondshire and York Districts by 500 dwellings in each case, and for Hambleton District by 300 dwellings, but that the figure for Scarborough District should be unaltered. The Panel also considered that some of the provision for York District would have to be provided outside its boundaries.

5.6 The Secretary of State recognises that while the provision for the county recommended by the Panel is below the 45,800 in the Alteration as submitted, it is not as low as the reduction of some 5,000 to 7,000 dwellings suggested by recent information on 'headship rates'. He accepts that market demand cannot be precisely quantified, and that such demands vary in different parts of the county. He considers that there needs to be some flexibility in the provision of land for housing to take account of demand, but after further considering representations

about his proposed modifications, he agrees with the Panel that in the areas close to West Yorkshire, the overall provision should not be of a scale which might hinder the regeneration of urban areas in that county. He takes the view that the aim of regenerating urban areas in West Yorkshire is a sufficiently well established objective to justify it being taken into account as a principle, amongst others, relevant to the assessment of an appropriate level of housing provision in North Yorkshire. He also agrees with the Panel that the quality of the environment in North Yorkshire warrants some restraint of unfettered market demand for housing, particularly having regard to the guidance in paragraph 3 of DOE Circular 15/84 about the need to accommodate necessary development in ways that protect amenity, and about the Government commitment to conservation policies. In this respect he notes that structure plan policies A.1, A.3, E.1 and E.8 identify particular areas where protection, conservation and restraint are appropriate, and together have effect over large parts of the county. He also notes that the theme of environmental conservation was an important part of the strategy of the approved structure plan.

5.7 The Secretary of State notes that the housing provision, in the Alteration as submitted, for some parts of the county caused greater concern than for others. In particular, the House Builders Federation suggested an increase in provision for the Harrogate, Ryedale, Scarborough and Selby Districts, and other concern was expressed that the provision for Scarborough District should be increased. However, in balancing these representations against the many other relevant factors drawn to his attention by the Panel, the Secretary of State does not consider that increasing the provision for these districts is justified. Rather, he accepts the Panel's opinion that in the case of Harrogate, Ryedale and Selby Districts a reduction in the proposed provision would be appropriate.

5.8 Although representations have been made about the Secretary of State's published intention to accept the provision for housing in Scarborough District as proposed by the County Council, he considers that there is insufficient reason to reduce the provision, which accords with that favoured at the EIP by both the County and the District Council. Although it was disputed, the evidence presented at the EIP about buoyant demand in the District is, in the Secretary of State's view, adequate reason for accepting the County Council's original proposal, in order to provide for flexibility in meeting housing demand.

5.9 Taking into account the implications of the 'headship rate' data derived from the 1981 Census the high quality of the environment in North Yorkshire, and the objective of urban regeneration in adjoining areas, the Secretary of State accepts the Panel's conclusions that the total provision of land for housing for the county for the period 1981 to 1996 should be for 42,000 new dwellings and that the provision for each district except Scarborough should be below that proposed in the submitted Structure Plan Alteration. He has modified policy H.1 accordingly. In

his view the figures proposed by the Panel take reasonable account of likely market demands for housing. He has considered representations about his proposed modifications but takes the view that the satisfaction of such demands will be aided by his removal of references to the words "up to" in the policy which might otherwise allow the figures to be treated as maxima for provision, and might imply that a lower provision would be admissible. He has, however, modified policy H.1 to provide for some flexibility by including instead the word "about", taking account of the Panel's preliminary view on the matter, expressed during the EIP. The Secretary of State has also had regard to the contribution to the housing market which might be expected by gains through the conversion of dwellings, such gains being additional to the provision in Policy H.1 as modified. In making these modifications he expects the take up of housing land to be kept under review so that restrictions which might encourage unwanted migration of people away from the county may be avoided.

5.10 As for the Greater York Area, the Secretary of State has noted the support given by the Panel and participants at the EIP to the principle of including in the Structure Plan a figure for housing provision in the area. Although references to the "York Inset Area" were deleted when the existing County Structure Plan was approved, the Secretary of State considers that the current pattern of development in the York area means that his normal preference that only district-wide guidance should be given could place an undue restriction on the proper planning of the area. He has therefore accepted the Panel's conclusions that a figure for housing provision for the Greater York Area should be included in policy H.1. The Secretary of State also accepts that some of the 3,200 dwelling provision for the York District may need to be found outside its boundaries. He considers that any balance of the 3,200 which cannot reasonably be met within the city should be provided within the remainder of the Greater York Area as an addition to the provisions set out for the relevant Districts in policy H.1.

5.11 The Secretary of State has noted the Panel's suggestion that the boundaries of the Greater York Area should be outside the York green belt area but, having regard to the document "Policies for Housing and Industrial Land in the Greater York Area" on which the County Council had based their proposed provision, and to which the Panel referred, he considers that the outer boundary of the Greater York Area should be between about 5 and 7 miles from the city centre, the precise boundary being a consideration for local planning. As a result, he has accepted the housing provision of 9,100 as recommended by the Panel, compared with 10,100 in policy H.1 of the Alteration as submitted.

5.12 The Secretary of State has also modified the proposals so that, for clarity, the districts contributing to the provision for the Greater York Area are named in policy H.1.

## 6. LAND FOR INDUSTRY

6.1 MODIFICATION: The Secretary of State has modified Alteration No 3: Policy I.5, by amending the provision of land for industry for the various districts in the county; by inserting a total for the County; by amending the provision for the Greater York Area; by removing the words "up to the following totals" inserting instead "about"; and by deleting the requirement for one third of the land supply to be maintained for immediate development, reinstating instead the land supply requirement of the approved policy.

6.2 In the Alteration as submitted, the County Council proposed a significant increase in the provision of industrial land when compared with that of the Approved Structure Plan. They argued that factors such as changes in workplace and the density at which land was developed provided justification for their revised figures. Although the North Yorkshire District Councils supported the proposed provision, representations were made by others that it was too high, especially in Harrogate, and that the County Council had used unrealistic assumptions in their calculations, resulting in an over-generous provision of land. Some West Yorkshire authorities considered that the provision would hinder the regeneration of their areas.

6.3 The Panel concluded that the provision was over-generous, partly because it was not supported by evidence of demand, and did not take account of the re-use of industrial land vacated by firms relocating. They took into account other factors, but were mainly concerned that the revised assumption that one hectare of land was required for 34 jobs instead of the 50 jobs used as the basis for calculation in the original Structure Plan had not been conclusively substantiated. Although they did not find real substantiation for the fears of the West Yorkshire authorities, they did consider that an over-generous supply of land in North Yorkshire would not help in the regeneration of old established areas in West Yorkshire. They were also concerned that the provision of too much land for industry might encourage excessive inward migration of people to North Yorkshire. The Panel considered that an assumption that one hectare of land would satisfy 43 jobs was a more appropriate basis for calculating land provision because it was the figure indicated by the County Council as likely to be achieved as development matured through the period up to 1996. They accordingly recommended revised figures, reducing the provision for the County from the 491 hectares proposed by the County Council to 410 hectares, including reductions of between 3 hectares and 18 hectares in the various districts of the County. They also considered that the new requirement in policy I.5 for a one third supply of land to be available in each District at any one time was unnecessary and could lead to the blight of land.

6.4 As he has made clear in DOE Circulars 16/84 and 14/85 the Secretary of State is concerned to ensure that unnecessary obstacles are not placed in the way of industrial development, and that sufficient land is made available for industrial use. He is also concerned that full use should be made of potential sites in the inner cities, so that unnecessary expansion of development into the countryside can be reduced, and that outside built-up areas the release of new land should be consistent with policies for the protection of agricultural land and other established planning policies. He has noted the Panel's opinions about the quality of the environment in North Yorkshire. While he considers that land should be available to satisfy the reasonable job requirements of the county, he shares the particular concern of the Panel about the way in which the industrial land provision has been calculated in the Alteration as submitted, and he accepts the basis of the Panel's recalculation and has modified policy I.5 to incorporate the recommended revised figures. In his view, policy I.5 as modified will make adequate provision for industry without creating undue environmental problems, and without creating unnecessary competition with nearby urban areas outside the county. The Secretary of State also considers that the reduced figures will more closely accord with the County Council's wish to reduce inward migration of people to the county. He does not, however, consider that the figures should be treated as maxima, with the implication that lesser provision might be acceptable, and he has therefore deleted the words "up to" but has included instead the word "about", to allow for some flexibility. He agrees that the requirement for one third of the land to be available in each District at any time is unnecessary, taking account of the absence of evidence of difficulties in the supply of land, and has removed this requirement from policy I.5 of the Alteration as submitted, in favour of the less specific requirement for land availability in the previously approved policy. In his view this allows greater flexibility in assessing appropriate levels of supply in different parts of the county, and has regard to the priorities in approved policy I.3 including the needs of the less accessible rural areas which he does not wish to see neglected.

6.5 In making these modifications, the Secretary of State nevertheless wishes the provision of industrial land to be kept under regular review by the County Council so that industrial regeneration is not unnecessarily hindered.

6.6 The Secretary of State has accepted the inclusion in the Plan of a figure for housing provision for the 'Greater York Area'. He similarly accepts the inclusion of a figure for industrial land provision in that area, for the reasons set out in paragraph 5.10 above. He considers that the provision for the Greater York Area should be 87 hectares as recommended by the Panel and that the area should be as described in paragraph 5.11. He has also modified the policy for clarity, to

identify the districts wholly or partly included in the area; in doing so, however, he considers that the contribution to the industrial land provision for the Greater York Area to be made by Hambleton District is likely to be very small. The Secretary of State has also noted the Panel's criticism that some of the provision for York District is unlikely to be met from within that district. He has modified the Plan to provide for 26 hectares for York District but he accepts that some of this provision may need to be found outside the district boundaries. He considers that any balance of the 26 hectares which cannot be reasonably met within the city should be provided in the remainder of the Greater York area as an addition to the provisions set out for the relevant Districts in policy I.5

## 7. TRANSPORT

7.1 MODIFICATION: The Secretary of State has modified Alteration No 6: Policy T.7a, by bringing up-to-date the list of trunk road schemes included.

7.2 This follows consultations with Department of Transport and the publication of the White Paper "Policy for Roads in England 1983" (Cmd 9059) and the report "National Roads England 1985", neither of which was taken fully into account in the submitted Alteration of policy T.7a.

7.3 MODIFICATION: The Secretary of State has modified Alteration No 7: Policy T.8 by removing the reference to a Glusburn Bypass (A6068).

7.4 Although one objection to the inclusion of the Glusburn Bypass in policy T.8 was withdrawn, the Panel concluded that uncertainties about the need and priority for the bypass made it premature to assess the justification for the scheme and they recommended its deletion.

7.5 The Secretary of State accepts the Panel's recommendation, having had particular regard to the representations made about the inadequacies of traffic data and to the apparent uncertainty of intention on the part of the County Council about other road schemes along the A6068 route. He has therefore deleted the Glusburn Bypass from policy T.8

## 8. AGRICULTURE

8.1 MODIFICATION: The Secretary of State has modified Alteration No 9, Policy A.5 to clarify the application of the term "small scale", and to replace the reference to the cost of public utility services with a proviso that the planning authority are satisfied that the necessary works are or will be provided.

8.2 Following advice from the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, the Secretary of State considers it unlikely that intensive livestock units would be viable if they are constrained by the inclusion in policy A.5 of the words "small scale". He has therefore modified the wording to clarify that the definition "small scale" relates to agricultural service industries and not to intensive livestock units.

8.3 As for the reference to the cost of public utility services, the Secretary of State has taken the view that the test of whether a proposal or planning application should be approved, in relation to the provision of infrastructure, is whether the infrastructure is available or likely to become available, rather than be determined by a subjective measure of cost. He has therefore modified policy A.5 accordingly.

#### 9. CARAVANS AND CAMPING

9.1 MODIFICATION: The Secretary of State has modified Alteration No 11: Policy E.11 by clarifying the criteria for the location of touring caravans and tent sites.

9.2 The Secretary of State has generally accepted revised wording suggested by the County Council and Scarborough Borough Council in respect of the objection by the latter that policy R.11 in the Alteration as submitted might be capable of misinterpretation because the wording does not make it clear that criteria other than agricultural land quality are applicable to an assessment of proposals for development. He has therefore modified the second sentence of policy R.11 to make it clear that the criteria in policy R.10 also apply to proposals for touring caravans and tent sites, but that exceptions may be made in respect of grades 1, 2 or 3(a) agricultural land or valley bottom land in upland areas.

#### 10. GREEN BELTS

10.1 MODIFICATION: The Secretary of State has deleted Alteration No 13: Policy E.8 - "Green Belts", thus reverting to the terms of the existing approved policy.

10.2 Although there have been a number of expressions of support for the County Council's proposed alteration to policy E.8 it was suggested at the EIP that, following DOE Circular 14/84, exceptional circumstances were necessary to justify an expansion of the green belt towards the southern and western boundaries of Harrogate, and that such expansion might unduly increase pressure for development elsewhere, particularly in the north-east Harrogate area. The Panel concluded that the development needs of the area would be better considered without the imposition of green belt, that local circumstances did not justify the proposed Alteration, and that there were no exceptional circumstances to warrant a change in the Secretary of State's previous decision not to extend green belt in the Harrogate area.

10.3 In the Secretary of State's opinion, the objections to his proposed modifications did not raise new issues and he accepts the conclusions and recommendations of the Panel and has accordingly deleted the Alteration to policy E.8. He notes, however, that the Panel considered as 'important' the land which keeps Harrogate apart from the village of Pannal, and their suggestion that some of the area south and west of Harrogate was worthy of protection in a local plan because of its landscape value.

10.4 In respect of Alteration No 14: Policy E.10, the Secretary of State agrees with the Panel that the Alteration clarifies the original policy relating to the

expansion of settlements within the green belt. He considers that the requirement for the establishment of a "need" for the expansion of a settlement will strengthen green belt control rather than weaken it as feared by some objectors. He has noted the concern expressed in several representations from people living on the north-east side of Harrogate about detailed development matters and precise green belt boundaries in their area but considers these to be inappropriate matters for him to resolve in the context of the Alteration to the Structure Plan. He has therefore approved Policy E.10 as proposed to be altered by the County Council.

#### 11. KEY DIAGRAM

11.1 MODIFICATION: The Secretary of State has modified the Key Diagram, Alteration No 15, as a consequence of his modifications concerning the Department of Transport Road Schemes (Policy T.7a), and Green Belts (Policy E.8).

11.2 The Secretary of State has decided that the Key Diagram should reflect the up-to-date programme of DTP trunk road schemes by including those schemes added to the programme; and that the boundary of green belt in the Harrogate area shall not be extended as proposed by the County Council.

#### COMMENT

12.1 As for the Panel's recommendations that a local plan be prepared by the County Council for the Greater York Area, and that local plans in the county should be prepared as soon as possible, the Secretary of State takes the view that these are matters for consideration jointly by the County and District Councils.

12.2 As a consequence of the Secretary of State's decisions, paragraphs 6.2-6.6 and 7.5 of the Notice of Approval of the North Yorkshire County Structure Plan, issued on 26 November 1980, have been superseded and are no longer relevant.

13. The Secretary of State's approval of the proposals for alteration is without prejudice to the consideration of detailed proposals in local plans. Some of the objections to the proposals straddled the levels of structure and local plans. All objections have been looked at to see whether they are relevant to the structural level. On some of them, the Secretary of State has formed no view of their planning merits because they were matters more appropriately considered at the local planning level.

14. The alterations to the structure plan shall become operative on 4 February 1987.

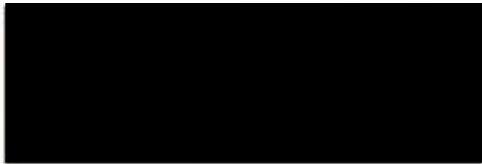
15. By virtue of section 20 of the 1971 Act, this notice of approval of the proposal for alterations to the structure plan forms part of the development plan for the county of North Yorkshire.

16. It should be clearly understood that the Secretary of State's approval of the proposals for alteration does not convey approval for other statutory purposes. In particular, it does not commit the Department of the Environment or any other

Government department to the payment of grant on any particular project or to the amount or timing of any capital expenditure programme.

17. A list of the modifications which the Secretary of State has made to the proposals for alteration is set out in an Appendix to this letter for information.

I am, Sir  
Your obedient Servant.



J P BALLARD  
Regional Director

# ANNEXE II Vii

NYCSP ALTERATION No.1

ADAPTED WRITTEN STATEMENT

(EXTRACTS)

# NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY STRUCTURE PLAN

North Yorkshire  
County Council 

**NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**  
**COUNTY STRUCTURE PLAN**

**WRITTEN STATEMENT**

(Approved by the Secretary of State for the Environment on 26th November 1980. Amended  
by Alteration No. 1, approved by the Secretary of State on 14th January 1987)

**NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**  
**MAY 1987**

John D. Rennison, MA MSc MRTPI ARICS MBIM  
County Planning Officer

## PREFACE

(This page does not form part of the approved Plan)

The North Yorkshire County Structure Plan was submitted to the Secretary of State for the Environment on 12th October 1979 and approved with modifications on 26th November 1980. The Plan became operative on 26th December 1980.

In January 1985, in pursuance of its statutory duty to keep the provisions of the Structure Plan under review, the County Council submitted Structure Plan Alteration No. 1 for approval by the Secretary of State for the Environment. The Alteration reviewed and rolled forward to 1996 the provisions of approved Policies H1, I5, T7, T7a and T8 and clarified or brought up to date the intentions of several other approved policies.

The Secretary of State approved Alteration No. 1, with modifications, on 14th January 1987 and the altered Plan became operative on 4th February 1987. All other policies have remained in the form in which they were approved in November 1980.

The North Yorkshire County Council is required to publish the County Structure Plan as approved by the Secretary of State and has, therefore, produced this document which replaces the document published in March 1981. As a result of the deletion of certain submitted policies by the Secretary of State, the policy numbers in the approved Plan are not consecutive.

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### Page Number

The Secretary of State's Decision Letter,  
dated 26 November 1980, Approving the  
North Yorkshire County Structure Plan with  
Modifications. 1

The Secretary of State's Decision Letter,  
dated 14 January 1987, Approving the North  
Yorkshire County Structure Plan Alteration No. 1  
with Modifications. 11

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Agriculture and Forestry	30
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### THE KEY DIAGRAM

inside back cover

- (i) RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES: SITES SHOULD BE LOCATED IN AREAS WITH LOCAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR INFORMAL COUNTRYSIDE RECREATION, BUT SHOULD NOT THEMSELVES BECOME DETRIMENTAL TO THOSE ATTRACTIONS;
- (ii) SERVICES: SITES SHOULD NORMALLY BE ACCESSIBLE TO EXISTING LOCAL SERVICES AND PUBLIC UTILITIES, BUT SHOULD NOT ADVERSELY AFFECT THEM;
- (iii) AMENITY: THE OVERALL LEVEL OF DEVELOPMENT IN ANY ONE AREA SHOULD NOT DETRACT FROM THE AMENITY PRESENTLY ENJOYED BY LOCAL RESIDENTS;
- (iv) ACCESS: SITES ACCOMMODATING CARAVANS SHOULD HAVE GOOD ACCESS TO THE MAJOR ROAD NETWORK DEFINED IN POLICY T1;
- (v) SITE UTILISATION: WHERE UTILISATION OF EXISTING SITES IS LOW, THERE WILL BE A PRESUMPTION AGAINST FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS; AND
- (vi) SPECIAL AREAS: PROPOSALS WILL BE RESISTED WHERE THEY WOULD ADVERSELY AFFECT AREAS OF NATURE CONSERVATION OR ARCHAEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE.

#### **POLICY R11**

SUBJECT TO THE CRITERIA IN POLICY R10, THERE WILL BE A PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF TOURING CARAVANS AND TENTS RATHER THAN STATIC CARAVANS. PROPOSALS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF TOURING CARAVANS AND TENT SITES WILL NORMALLY BE PERMITTED WHERE THEY ARE IN ACCORDANCE WITH POLICY R.10 EXCEPT WHERE THEY ARE LOCATED ON GRADES 1, 2 OR 3 (a) AGRICULTURAL LAND OR ON THE VALLEY BOTTOM LAND IN UPLAND AREAS.

PREFERENCE WILL BE GIVEN TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF HOLIDAY CHALET SITES RATHER THAN STATIC CARAVAN SITES. THE CONVERSION OF STATIC CARAVAN SITES TO CHALET SITES WILL NORMALLY BE PERMITTED.

### **ENVIRONMENT**

#### **POLICY E1**

PRIORITY WILL BE GIVEN TO THE CONSERVATION OF THE LANDSCAPES AND GENERAL AMENITY OF THE FOLLOWING AREAS:-

THE NORTH YORK MOORS NATIONAL PARK;  
 THE YORKSHIRE DALES NATIONAL PARK;  
 THE FOREST OF BOWLAND AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY;  
 THE NIDDERDALE MOORS;  
 THE HOWARDIAN HILLS;  
 THE NORTH YORKSHIRE AND CLEVELAND HERITAGE COAST; AND  
 THE FLAMBOROUGH HEAD HERITAGE COAST.

WITHIN THESE AREAS:-

- (i) THERE WILL BE A PRESUMPTION AGAINST NEW DEVELOPMENT OR MAJOR EXTENSIONS TO EXISTING DEVELOPMENT EXCEPT WHERE IT CAN BE SHOWN TO BE NECESSARY IN THAT LOCATION.
- (ii) WHEN DEVELOPMENT IS PERMITTED, HIGH STANDARDS OF DESIGN WILL BE REQUIRED, USING APPROPRIATE MATERIALS AND PAYING DUE REGARD TO ITS SETTING.
- (iii) MEASURES WILL BE TAKEN TO PROTECT AND ENHANCE THE LANDSCAPE, IMPORTANT BUILDINGS AND OTHER HERITAGE FEATURES.

*POLICIES E2 and E3 deleted*

**POLICY E4**

BUILDINGS AND AREAS OF SPECIAL TOWNSCAPE, ARCHITECTURAL OR HISTORIC INTEREST WILL BE AFFORDED THE STRICTEST PROTECTION.

**POLICY E5**

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS WHICH COULD RESULT IN DAMAGE TO, OR THE DESTRUCTION OF, SITES OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE WILL NORMALLY BE REFUSED.

**POLICY E6**

DEVELOPMENT WILL NORMALLY NOT BE PERMITTED WITHIN NATIONAL NATURE RESERVES, LOCAL NATURE RESERVES AND SITES OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST OR IN ADJOINING LOCATIONS WHERE DEVELOPMENT WOULD HAVE AN ADVERSE EFFECT ON SUCH SITES. SPECIAL CONSIDERATION WILL BE GIVEN TO OTHER NOTIFIED SITES OF NATURE CONSERVATION SIGNIFICANCE AND WILDLIFE HABITATS IN EXAMINING PROPOSALS FOR DEVELOPMENT.

**POLICY E7**

DEVELOPMENT WHICH WOULD GIVE RISE TO SUBSTANTIALLY INCREASED LEVELS OF NOISE, WATER OR AIR POLLUTION OR WOULD BE HAZARDOUS AND SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASE THE RISKS TO MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC WILL NORMALLY NOT BE PERMITTED, BUT THE EXPANSION OF EXISTING INDUSTRY OR DEVELOPMENT ESSENTIAL TO AGRICULTURE, MINERAL EXTRACTION AND PROCESSING OR OTHER ESTABLISHED INDUSTRIES IN NORTH YORKSHIRE MAY BE ALLOWED.

**POLICY E8**

THE NORTH YORKSHIRE GREEN BELTS WILL CONSIST OF:

- (i) A BAND FROM 1 TO 5 MILES WIDE ALONG THE COUNTY'S SOUTHERN BOUNDARY, FROM THE BOUNDARY OF THE YORKSHIRE DALES NATIONAL PARK TO WEST OF WETHERBY;
- (ii) A STRIP BETWEEN HARROGATE AND KNARESBOROUGH;
- (iii) A BAND SOME 4 MILES WIDE ALONG THE WESTERN BOUNDARY OF SELBY DISTRICT, FROM WEST OF TADCASTER TO THE BOUNDARY WITH SOUTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY.

THESE GREEN BELTS WILL BROADLY INCLUDE THOSE AREAS PREVIOUSLY APPROVED BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE AS GREEN BELT (SOME ON AN INTERIM BASIS) WITH THE ADDITION OF A SMALL AREA SOUTH OF BALNE MOOR:

- (iv) A BELT WHOSE OUTER EDGE IS ABOUT 6 MILES FROM YORK CITY CENTRE.

**POLICY E8a**

IN DEFINING THE PRECISE BOUNDARIES OF THE GREEN BELT IN LOCAL PLANS, ACCOUNT WILL BE TAKEN OF:

- (i) THE NEED TO REGULATE THE SIZE AND SHAPE OF URBAN AREAS IN ORDER TO PREVENT UNCONTROLLED GROWTH;
- (ii) THE NEED TO PREVENT THE COALESCENCE OF EXISTING SETTLEMENTS;
- (iii) THE NEED TO PRESERVE AREAS OF OPEN LAND EXTENDING INTO THE URBAN AREA FROM THE COUNTRYSIDE WHICH HAVE AN EXISTING OR POTENTIAL RECREATIONAL OR AMENITY VALUE;
- (iv) THE NEED TO PRESERVE EASY ACCESS TO OPEN COUNTRY AND OUTDOOR RECREATION IN PLEASANT SURROUNDINGS.

**POLICY E9**

PLANNING PERMISSION WITHIN GREEN BELT AREAS WILL NORMALLY BE GRANTED ONLY FOR THE ERECTION OF NEW BUILDINGS, OR THE THE CHANGE OF USE OR REDEVELOPMENT OF EXISTING BUILDINGS WHICH ARE NECESSARY IN CONNECTION WITH THE FOLLOWING LAND USES:-

- (i) AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY;
- (ii) OUTDOOR SPORT AND RECREATION;
- (iii) CEMETERIES OR INSTITUTIONS STANDING IN EXTENSIVE GROUNDS; AND
- (iv) OTHER USES APPROPRIATE IN A RURAL AREA.

**POLICY E10**

THE EXPANSION OF SETTLEMENTS WITHIN THE GREEN BELTS, APART FROM MINOR INFILLING, WILL NOT NORMALLY BE PERMITTED. WHERE A NEED FOR EXPANSION CAN BE ESTABLISHED, THE SETTLEMENT WILL BE EXCLUDED FROM THE GREEN BELT AND THE PRECISE BOUNDARY OF THE EXTENDED SETTLEMENT DEFINED IN A LOCAL PLAN WHEN THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA WILL NEED TO BE SATISFIED:-

- (i) THE DEVELOPMENT PROPOSED IS OF AN APPROPRIATE SCALE AND TYPE; AND
- (ii) THE PUBLIC UTILITIES HAVE SUFFICIENT SPARE CAPACITY; AND
- (iii) ADEQUATE SHOPS AND PRIMARY EDUCATION FACILITIES ARE AVAILABLE.

*POLICIES E11 and E12 deleted*

*POLICIES FOR THE YORK INSET AREA (YP1 to YP22) deleted*

# ANNEXE II Viii

1995 NYCSP

G.B. POLICIES

OCTOBER 1995.

## **POLICIES**

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### **ENVIRONMENT**

#### **POLICY E1**

PRIORITY WILL BE GIVEN TO THE CONSERVATION OF THE LANDSCAPES AND GENERAL AMENITY OF THE FOLLOWING AREAS:-

THE NORTH YORK MOORS NATIONAL PARK;  
THE YORKSHIRE DALES NATIONAL PARK;  
THE FOREST OF BOWLAND AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY;  
THE NIDDERDALE MOORS;  
THE HOWARDIAN HILLS;  
THE NORTH YORKSHIRE AND CLEVELAND HERITAGE COAST; AND  
THE FLAMBOROUGH HEAD HERITAGE COAST.

WITHIN THESE AREAS:-

- (i) THERE WILL BE A PRESUMPTION AGAINST NEW DEVELOPMENT OR MAJOR EXTENSIONS TO EXISTING DEVELOPMENT EXCEPT WHERE IT CAN BE SHOWN TO BE NECESSARY IN THAT LOCATION.
- (ii) WHEN DEVELOPMENT IS PERMITTED, HIGH STANDARDS OF DESIGN WILL BE REQUIRED, USING APPROPRIATE MATERIALS AND PAYING DUE REGARD TO ITS SETTING.
- (iii) MEASURES WILL BE TAKEN TO PROTECT AND ENHANCE THE LANDSCAPE, IMPORTANT BUILDINGS AND OTHER HERITAGE FEATURES.

#### **POLICY E2**

DEVELOPMENT IN THE OPEN COUNTRYSIDE OUTSIDE THE NATIONAL PARKS, AREAS OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY, AREAS OF HERITAGE COAST AND GREEN BELTS WILL NORMALLY BE PERMITTED ONLY WHERE IT RELATES TO:-

- (i) SMALL SCALE PROPOSALS REQUIRING AN OPEN COUNTRYSIDE LOCATION FOR OPERATIONAL REASONS; AND
- (ii) SMALL SCALE PROPOSALS FOR INDIVIDUAL SITES OR FOR THE RE-USE OR ADAPTATION OF EXISTING RURAL BUILDINGS TO SECURE EMPLOYMENT USES WHICH BENEFIT THE RURAL ECONOMY.

AND PROVIDED IT WOULD NOT HARM THE CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE, GENERAL AMENITY OR NATURE CONSERVATION INTERESTS OF THE SURROUNDING AREA.

*POLICY E3 deleted*

## POLICIES

### POLICY E4

BUILDINGS AND AREAS OF SPECIAL TOWNSCAPE, ARCHITECTURAL OR HISTORIC INTEREST WILL BE AFFORDED THE STRICTEST PROTECTION.

### POLICY E5

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS WHICH COULD RESULT IN DAMAGE TO, OR THE DESTRUCTION OF, SITES OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE WILL NORMALLY BE REFUSED.

### POLICY E6

DEVELOPMENT WILL NORMALLY NOT BE PERMITTED WITHIN NATIONAL NATURE RESERVES, LOCAL NATURE RESERVES AND SITES OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST OR IN ADJOINING LOCATIONS WHERE DEVELOPMENT WOULD HAVE AN ADVERSE EFFECT ON SUCH SITES. SPECIAL CONSIDERATION WILL BE GIVEN TO OTHER NOTIFIED SITES OF NATURE CONSERVATION SIGNIFICANCE AND WILDLIFE HABITATS IN EXAMINING PROPOSALS FOR DEVELOPMENT.

### POLICY E7

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- (ii) A STRIP BETWEEN HARROGATE AND KNARESBOROUGH;
- (iii) A BAND SOME 4 MILES WIDE ALONG THE WESTERN BOUNDARY OF SELBY DISTRICT, FROM WEST OF TADCASTER TO THE BOUNDARY WITH SOUTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY.

THESE GREEN BELTS WILL BROADLY INCLUDE THOSE AREAS PREVIOUSLY APPROVED BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE AS GREEN BELT (SOME ON AN INTERIM BASIS) WITH THE ADDITION OF A SMALL AREA SOUTH OF BALNE MOOR:

- (iv) A BELT WHOSE OUTER EDGE IS ABOUT 8 MILES FROM YORK CITY CENTRE.

## **POLICIES**

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### **POLICY E8a**

IN DEFINING THE PRECISE BOUNDARIES OF THE GREEN BELT IN LOCAL PLANS, ACCOUNT WILL BE TAKEN OF:-

- (i) THE NEED TO REGULATE THE SIZE AND SHAPE OF URBAN AREAS IN ORDER TO PREVENT UNCONTROLLED GROWTH;
- (ii) THE NEED TO PREVENT THE COALESCENCE OF EXISTING SETTLEMENTS;
- (iii) THE NEED TO PRESERVE AREAS OF OPEN LAND EXTENDING INTO THE URBAN AREA FROM THE COUNTRYSIDE WHICH HAVE AN EXISTING OR POTENTIAL RECREATIONAL OR AMENITY VALUE;
- (iv) THE NEED TO PRESERVE EASY ACCESS TO OPEN COUNTRY AND OUTDOOR RECREATION IN PLEASANT SURROUNDINGS.

### **POLICY E9**

PLANNING PERMISSION WITHIN GREEN BELT AREAS WILL NORMALLY BE GRANTED ONLY FOR THE ERECTION OF NEW BUILDINGS, OR FOR THE CHANGE OF USE OR REDEVELOPMENT OF EXISTING BUILDINGS WHICH ARE NECESSARY IN CONNECTION WITH THE FOLLOWING LAND USES:-

- (i) AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY;
- (ii) OUTDOOR SPORT AND RECREATION;
- (iii) CEMETERIES OR INSTITUTIONS STANDING IN EXTENSIVE GROUNDS; AND
- (iv) OTHER USES APPROPRIATE IN A RURAL AREA.

### **POLICY E10**

THE EXPANSION OF SETTLEMENTS WITHIN THE GREEN BELTS, APART FROM MINOR INFILLING, WILL NOT NORMALLY BE PERMITTED. WHERE A NEED FOR EXPANSION CAN BE ESTABLISHED, THE SETTLEMENT WILL BE EXCLUDED FROM THE GREEN BELT AND THE PRECISE BOUNDARY OF THE EXTENDED SETTLEMENT DEFINED IN A LOCAL PLAN WHEN THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA WILL NEED TO BE SATISFIED:-

- (i) THE DEVELOPMENT PROPOSED IS OF AN APPROPRIATE SCALE AND TYPE; AND
- (ii) THE PUBLIC UTILITIES HAVE SUFFICIENT SPARE CAPACITY; AND
- (iii) ADEQUATE SHOPS AND PRIMARY EDUCATION FACILITIES ARE AVAILABLE.

*POLICIES E11 AND E12 deleted*

*POLICIES FOR THE YORK INSET AREA (YP1 TO YP22) deleted*

# ANNEXE II ix

REGIONAL PLANNING GUIDANCE 2001

RPG12- YORKSHIRE & THE HUMBER

EXTRACTS AND KEY DIGRAM



GOVERNMENT OFFICE  
FOR YORKSHIRE AND THE HUMBER

# Regional Planning Guidance for Yorkshire and the Humber (RPG12)



October 2001

London: The Stationery Office

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which support sustainable development objectives, provide a good range of local services, and which are the most accessible in the area by a range of transport modes. Yorkshire Forward and the Government Agency's market towns initiative is a relevant context for this.

4.11 Policy P1 describes the strategic pattern of development that should take place in the region. Local planning authorities should seek to identify all opportunities for development within urban areas, starting with previously-developed land which is suitable for development (i.e. does not need to be protected for reasons such as biodiversity, amenity, recreational or landscape townscape value or to avoid flooding). If sufficient land cannot be identified within the urban areas, well-planned extensions to them should be considered next.

4.12 In order to sustainable forms of development cannot be found in the above manner that the third option need to be considered i.e. at nodes along public transport corridors. Such corridors could vary considerably according to local circumstances, but the following characteristics would be:-

- corridors would run from within a main urban area
- corridors would be a public transport route with good capacity or the potential to develop new services and facilities, particularly rail-based, which such routes will attract a significant proportion of the trips generated
- potential to already allocated sites at accessible nodes where development could be accommodated without generating local traffic congestion, leading to ribbon development, reducing high quality landscape or undermining the fundamental objectives of the Green Belt.

4.13 Such corridor studies have the potential for reducing the travel demands that would arise from a less compact approach, and allow more of these demands to be met by public transport. They may well cross boundaries of strategic planning areas, and where this is the case should be the subject of

joint studies. Guidance relevant to such studies can be found in Chapter 3 section 2 of "Planning for Sustainable Development: Towards Better Practice" (DETR 1998).

4.12 Policy P1 recognises that, although most development should be focussed on the main urban areas, there will also be a need for development in smaller towns and rural areas. As with the main urban areas, opportunities should be identified in market and coalfield towns, but also in smaller settlements where appropriate in the context of Policy P1.

4.13 The final part of Policy P1 supplements the general approach to defining strategic patterns of development in urban and rural areas by identifying three regionally significant locations: Dearne Valley Development Zone; Humber Trade Zone; and West Yorkshire/Barnsley area. Details of the implications for these locations are included in the sub-regional sections at the end of this chapter.

## GREEN BELTS

4.14 The general extent of the Green Belts in the region is shown on the Key Diagram. In general the Green Belts in the region have helped to achieve the aims set out in paragraph 15 of PPG2, although in themselves they have not been fully able to prevent the dispersion of development and activity described in Chapter 2.

### Policy P2 Green Belts

- a) *The Green Belts in North, South and West Yorkshire have a valuable role in supporting urban renaissance and concentration, as well as conserving countryside, and their general extent should not be changed.*
- b) *More localised review of Green Belt boundaries may be necessary in some places through development plan reviews, but only if justified by exceptional local*

circumstances. Any such review should clearly demonstrate, having regard to the regional spatial strategy and other relevant RPG policies that release of land:-

- i) is necessary to meet the wider principles of sustainable development in comparison with other available options;
  - ii) is justified by reference to the capacity of the existing urban area, and the need to enable development to proceed to achieve economic regeneration or to maintain a buoyant economy or to meet housing requirements;
  - iii) does not materially harm the fundamental aim of national Green Belt policy in the area concerned.
- c) Localised reviews should also consider whether exceptional circumstances exist to include additional land as Green Belt.

4.15 The implementation of the regional spatial strategy should not require any change to the general extent of Green Belt for the foreseeable future. However there may be a more specific and localised need to reconsider the extent of Green Belt to meet identifiable development needs for which urban locations are not available and for which alternative sites would be significantly less sustainable. In accordance with Policy P1, any such changes ought to be considered first on the edge of the urban areas and should only be proposed in development plan reviews following the completion of urban capacity studies and consideration of strategic options, where appropriate in consultation with adjoining local planning authorities. Any proposal to alter an established Green Belt boundary should be related to a longer-term time-scale than other aspects of the development plan. Therefore, if land is to be taken out of the Green Belt to meet identifiable development needs, consideration should also be given to designating safeguarded land related to it in accordance with the advice in Annex B of PPG2. Other than in such circumstances, it will not be appropriate to

change established Green Belt boundaries in order to provide safeguarded land – to do so would undermine the long term strategy for urban renaissance and would not comply with the criteria set out in Policy P2. Existing safeguarded land should be reviewed in the context of Policy P3 below. Further commentary on Green Belt is contained in the sub-regional sections at the end of this chapter.

## REVIEW OF EXISTING COMMITMENTS

4.16 A significant issue in the region is the large stock of existing permissions and allocations, particularly for housing and economic development. If this is not addressed, the ability to plan, monitor and manage and achieve the regional spatial strategy will be undermined. Policy P3 is therefore of strategic importance.

4.17 In the case of employment land, reviews should be informed by the regional employment land survey (see Chapter 5). Development plan policies relating to all land that is retained for employment use following such a review should make it clear that retail and leisure uses are not appropriate.

4.18 In the case of housing land it is vital to the attainment of the spatial strategy that sites outside urban areas are reviewed as a matter of urgency and that in the meantime planning applications are determined in the context of the advice in PPG3 paragraph 38 and Policies H2 and H3.

4.19 Existing road schemes in development plans, many of which have a long history, should be reviewed to ensure that they are consistent with the spatial strategy which is based on minimising the need to travel and maximising the use of alternative modes to the car. Schemes which are not consistent should be excluded from development plans.

where there are significant implications for spatial change at the regional or sub-regional level.

## North Yorkshire Sub-region

### STRATEGIC PATTERNS OF DEVELOPMENT

4.21 The main urban areas of Harrogate, Scarborough and York should, in accordance with Policies P1, E4 and H2, be the focus for economic and housing development in the sub-region. York is of regional significance and development should be accommodated to build on the success of its economy in a sustainable way which respects its historic character. Application of the sequential approach should mean that there will be no need for authorities in the sub-region to undertake corridor studies.

4.22 There are several market towns in the sub-region including Malton, Northallerton, Richmond, Ripon, Selby, Settle, Skipton and Whitby which, along with other towns identified through the development plan process as described in paragraph 4.8, should be the focus for economic and housing development of a scale and type appropriate to rural areas in accordance with Policies P1, E2 and H2 to enhance their role as service/employment centres. The potential for mixed use conversions of existing buildings in these settlements should be exploited.

4.23 Catterick Garrison in Richmondshire is the largest garrison town in the north of the country. Whether it should be included in the market town category, and its potential for growth, are matters to be determined through the structure and local plan process in accordance with relevant policies in RPG and the overall spatial strategy.

### REGENERATION PRIORITY AREAS

4.24 Part of Selby District falls within the coalfield area which is first priority for regeneration in the region (Policy S2) although it is not eligible for

Objective 1 funding. The Selby coalfield may close down during the RPG period, in which case the future use of the surface sites, which are in rural locations, would need to be carefully considered in accordance with sustainable development principles, including the locational criteria in Policy P1 and E4.

4.25 The sub-region contains fairly extensive remote rural and coastal areas which fall into the second priority for regeneration (S2). Those currently eligible for Objective 2 funding are shown on the Key Diagram. Development plans for these, and other rural parts of the sub-region, will need in particular to promote regeneration.

### RURAL AND COASTAL ISSUES

4.26 North Yorkshire is the most rural part of the region and contains extensive areas of high quality landscape, including the Yorkshire Dales and North York Moors National Parks and Nidderdale and Howardian Hills AONBs, parts of the Forest of Bowland AONB, and coastline. The important inter-relationships between agriculture, estate management, wildlife, tourism and recreation need to be addressed in development plans in the sub-region. Policies on rural employment (E2), tourism (E6), agriculture (N5), and the coast (R1) will be of particular significance.

4.27 The need to continue the restructuring of the coastal economy is essential, in particular to address acute social and economic problems within the resort towns such as Filey, Scarborough and Whitby. Aside from accommodating tourist pressure in a diverse and sensitive environment, there is a need for new employment development.

### GREEN BELT

4.28 There are two Green Belts in the sub-region: that around York, and that to the east and south of Harrogate and along the western side of Selby district which form an integral part of the Green Belt around the West Yorkshire conurbation.

4.29 The general extent of the York Green Belt was approved in 1980 and the detailed boundaries are yet to be finalised. In so doing account should be taken of Policy P2 and of the need to ensure that it will not need to be amended again at the end of the plan period.

4.30 It is unlikely that there will be any need to alter the Green Belt in Harrogate or in Selby (once it is established in the district-wide local plan) in order to implement the regional spatial strategy.

## EMPLOYMENT LAND

4.31 In 1999 there was around 30 years supply of undeveloped employment land in the North Yorkshire sub-region based on past rates of development, 80% of which was greenfield. It is important therefore that all existing allocations are reviewed in accordance with Policy P3.

4.32 The majority of employment land in the region should be to meet sub-regional and local development needs (E3d). This should be focussed on the main urban areas and market and coastal towns in accordance with Policies P1 and E4, with particular emphasis on unlocking the potential of appropriate sites within the regeneration priority areas.

4.33 The distribution of the regionally significant employment sites in the region will not be finalised until after the completion of the regional employment land survey, but it is likely that one premium site will be required in the sub-region. This should be well located in relation to the City of York in accordance with the criteria set out in Policy E4. Such a site could be suitable for a science and technology park (Policy E4b)(ii), capitalising on relations with York University and in accordance with the "centres of excellence" concept. In bringing this proposal forward full consideration should be given to complementary measures to ensure that employment opportunities and the economic benefits will be accessible to areas in need of regeneration.

## HOUSING

4.34 The annual rate of housing provision in the North Yorkshire sub-region should be around 2,500 in accordance with Policy H1. This represents a reduction compared to the past. However, initial estimates of urban potential done at a regional level suggest that there may not be sufficient capacity within existing settlements to accommodate this level of housing in the longer term. Local urban capacity studies should examine this further and it is particularly important that local planning authorities apply Policies H2 and H3 to ensure that greenfield sites are not released unnecessarily and that additional provision is focussed on the urban areas.

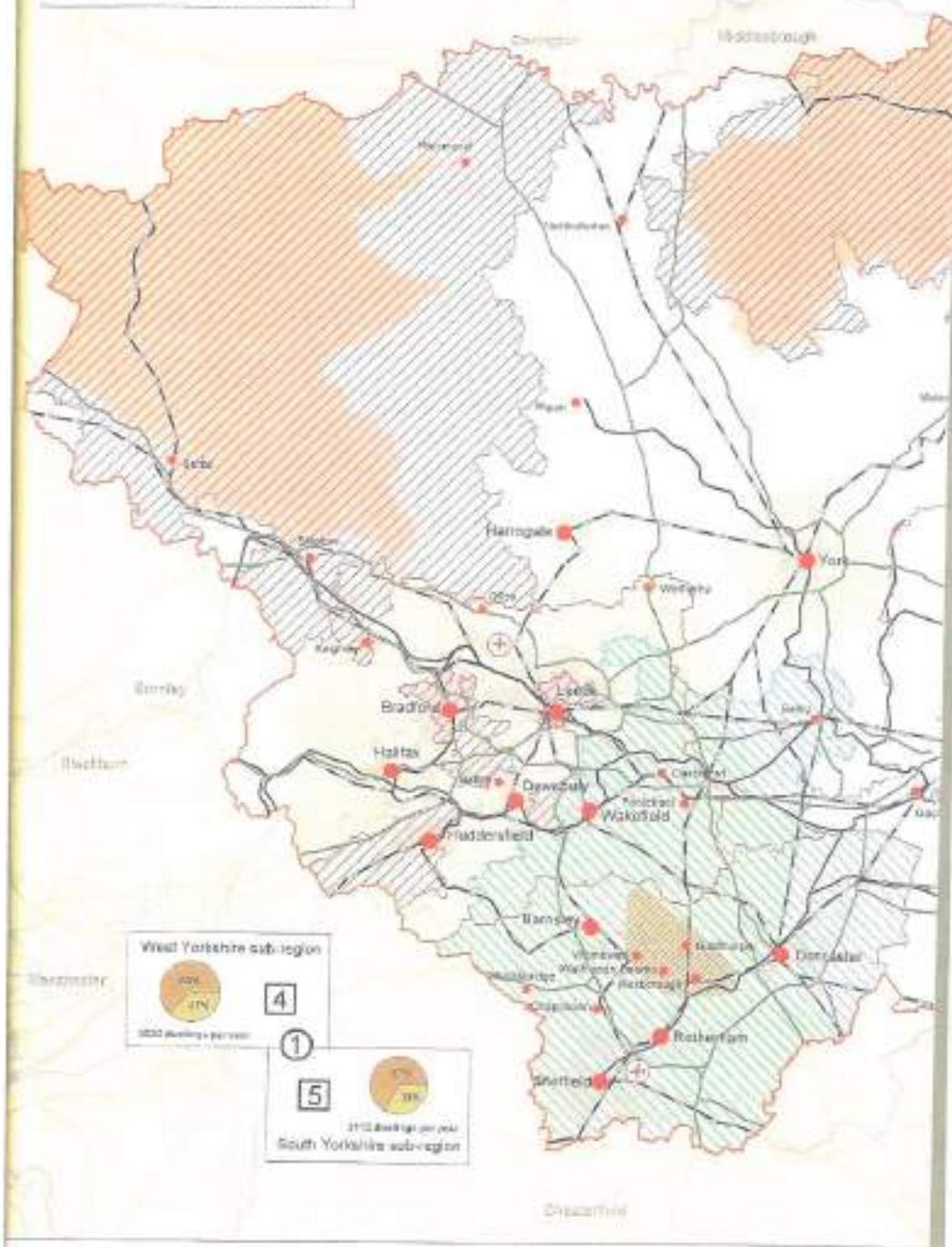
4.35 The provisional target for the provision of dwellings on previously-developed land and through conversions in the North Yorkshire sub-region is 53% (see Table H1 in Chapter 6). This is below the regional average due to the limited availability of suitably located previously-developed sites. It will need to be reviewed in the context of local urban capacity studies.

4.36 The sub-region contains a number of high demand areas, including Harrogate and York and the more accessible parts of Selby, Ryedale and the National Parks (where the demand for second homes is a particular issue). In these areas localised shortages of affordable housing is a particularly significant issue and local authorities should consider whether affordable homes should be sought on sites down to 15 dwellings/0.5 ha in accordance with Policy H4. In settlements of 3000 or less no thresholds apply and local authorities can seek a proportion of affordable housing even on the smallest sites.

## TRANSPORT

4.37 The focus of development in the three main urban areas of Harrogate, York and Scarborough needs to be matched by appropriate transport strategies in development plans and local transport plans for these areas. Existing local transport plans for all three areas have recognised the importance

# 10. KEY DIAGRAM





### Notation Panel

- Regional boundary
- Sub-regional boundary

### Strategy

- Fast growth regeneration area S1
- Sustainable growth regeneration area S2
- Devon Valley Development Zone P1
- Hambleton Trade Zone P1
- Green Belt P2
- National Parks

### Settlements

- Major urban areas P1 P1 P4 P5 P6 SDC3
- Centres of market and coastal towns P1 P1 P3 H3 H3 T6 SDC3

### Economy

- Major single use sites S2
- Industrial estates of local premium or planned sites S2
- Major Hambleton industrial sites S3

### Housing

- 5 or more person dwellings built and through conversions H1
- Average annual housing provision 1998-2016 H1

### Transport

- Strategic highway network E4 T4 T3 T6 T10
- Strategic rail network E4 T1 T3 T10
- Navigable waterways E4 T1 T3 T10
- Main ports H1 T1 T3 T10
- Commercial airports T9 T10

Disruption on the strategic road network and the targeted programme of transport works are shown on Map 6

### Environment

Environmental designations are shown on Map 5  
Geological character and natural areas are shown on Map 7  
Agricultural land quality is shown on Map 8  
Flood risk areas are shown on Map 9

Map produced by the Commission for the Environment  
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# ANNEXE II X

RSS 2008 – BACKGROUND MATERIAL

the Plan on sites of European significance. We may have further comments to make when the Appropriate Assessment has been completed.

### Sub Issue C Clarity of Approach

#### 2/7 Does the approach provide an appropriate level of detail for the preparation of Local Development Frameworks and other plans and strategies?

Broadly, we think that the level of detail in policy Y1 and on the Context Diagram (Fig 9.2) is broadly appropriate for RSS. However, we do not think that the Plan provides sufficiently clear guidance for the preparation of LDFs in the sub area in relation to the **Green Belt around York**.

The York sub area section of the Plan makes no mention of the Green Belt. The detailed inner boundary of the Green Belt around York has not been defined in a statutory development plan, but most of the outer boundary has been<sup>3</sup>. Paragraph 1.15 of draft RSS says that policy E8 of the North Yorkshire Structure Plan should be saved to avoid a policy void on the general extent of the Green Belt in North Yorkshire. We do not think this appropriate for two reasons. Firstly, if policy E8 were still appropriate, we think it ought to be included in RSS. Secondly, we do not think that policy E8 is still appropriate. It doesn't provide any clear guidance to York for defining the inner edge of the Green Belt in the context of the Core Approach and the scale and location of development set out in draft RSS. Policy YH9 carries forward a policy on Green Belts from current RSS, which we comment on in our statement for matter 1F – we do not think that it provides adequate guidance for the York Green Belt.

Therefore we think that RSS ought to include a policy and a diagram in the York sub area section to guide the definition of the detailed inner boundary, and remaining parts of the outer boundary, of the Green Belt around York. This needs to be sufficiently permanent to allow for York's growth as set out in RSS well beyond 2026, in line with PPG2.

#### 2/8 Could the approach be better explained or illustrated?

We think that some parts of policy Y1 could be more specific (eg see comments above about Y1A). Monitoring indicators and targets clearly linked to the policy outcomes would help to clarify them.

Paragraphs 9.2-9.15 contain a lot of descriptive contextual information. We think this ought to be amended to more clearly explain and justify policy Y1.

We support the inclusion of a York sub area Context Diagram but think that it could be improved to more clearly indicate the broad locations and proposals in policy Y1. For example it would be helpful if it showed:

- the broad extent of the main urban areas (in a similar way to the South Yorkshire concept diagram).
- Strategic highway network
- Broad areas of "restraint especially north and east of York urban area" (Y1E)
- **General extent of the Green Belt around York**

<sup>3</sup> Parts of the outer boundary of the Green Belt around York has been defined in Local Plans for Harrogate, Hambleton, Ryedale and Selby

**REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY  
THE YORKSHIRE & HUMBER PLAN**

**Outcome of Panel Report from the  
Public Examination of Draft Plan**

**YORK GREEN BELT**

**Report on the Promotion of a Policy in the  
RSS Process**

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**Regional Spatial Strategy – The Yorkshire & Humber Plan  
Outcome of Panel Report from the Public Examination of the Draft Plan**

**York Green Belt**

**Report on RSS Examination Process**

**1.0 The Background**

- 1.1 This note relates to representations made to the Public Examination of the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) in relation to the York Green Belt made by a consortium of locally based planning consultants – Jennifer Hubbard, Janet O’Neill and George Wright [the Consortium].
- 1.2 The representations argued that the RSS was legally required to provide a policy which fixed the general extent of the York Green Belt (replacing policy E8 of the NYCC Structure Plan originally formulated in 1980) and which identified the requirement for safeguarded land within the green belt. The NYCC policy made no provision for safeguarded land within the general extent of the green belt.
- 1.3 In the absence of any policy proposals being put to the Examination by the Regional Assembly or any other recognised ‘official’ representation such as Government Office or City of York Council, a proposal was submitted by the Consortium and this was supported by a Sustainability Appraisal.
- 1.4 On the day of the session at the Examination to consider the York Green Belt, the Regional Assembly offered a brief policy that was less explicit than the much criticised NYCC policy E8. The Panel curtailed discussion reducing the days session to a morning only and additionally indicated that they were not prepared to debate the detail of the Consortium’s policy proposals.

## 2.0 The Panel Report

### 2.1 The key conclusions of the Panel are:-

- They did not consider the RSS Examination had sufficient evidence in front of it to consider the Consortium's proposed policy and diagrammatic map.
- That the issue of the general extent of the York Green Belt should be resolved either:-
  - By the relevant part of the RSS not being adopted and the issue being referred for consultation, or
  - The Local Development Framework process (presumably the York LDF) resolving the inner boundaries.

### 2.2 The Panel considered that *only* the inner boundary has to be defined

### 2.3 At paragraph 5.3 of the Panel Report, in relation to housing provision at York, the Panel recommended that the next review of RSS and in the LDF work, *the environmental capacity of York* needed to be established.

### 2.4 The final conclusion is set out at paragraph 13.76 of the Panel Report:-

*'therefore, and whilst acknowledging the detailed work undertaken by [the Consortium], we consider that they do not have enough information on, or know the public reaction to, any form of green belt boundaries or the future shape of the urban form for York. This is particularly so as there has been no public consultation on the detailed proposals and Inset Map which was tabled by [the Consortium]. To remit this back for further consultation is likely to incur further delay.'*

*It is our view that the quickest means in resolving this matter is for policy YH 9 (re-cast as ENV policy) to include specific requirements to draw up an inner boundary through an LDF, and for this to be shown on the key diagram and noted in the supporting text for the new ENV policy. We consider it is imperative this work in undertaken as a priority.*

### **3.0 Commentary on Panel Report Findings**

- 3.1 The Panel drew attention to advice given in PPG 2 that Structure Plans should provide the strategic policy context for planning at local level. The general extent of green belts has been fixed through the approval of Structure Plans. It seems that they selectively declined to refer to the preceding paragraph of 2.2 of PPG 2 which states *'Regional and Strategic Planning Guidance set the framework for green belt policy and settlement policy including the direction of long term development'*.
- 3.2 It is the Consortium's view that the reference to Structure Plans providing the strategic policy context should, in today's planning policy framework, means a reference to the Regional Spatial Strategy. The policy in PPG2 was written in 1995, when the policy framework consisted of the Regional Policy Guidance and the Development Plan which consisted of the Structure Plan and the Local Plan. At today's date the Development Plan consists of the Regional Spatial Strategy and the LDF. Thus the RSS provides the strategic policy which was previously provided by Structure Plan policy and Regional Planning Guidance, guidance on policy. Strategic policy and guidance is now provided through the RSS rather than the Structure Plan.
- 3.3 The Panel then went on to consider issues relating to *'locational specificity'* which is an aspect of policy set out in Planning Policy Statement 11. This provides policy relating to the formulation of regional spatial strategies. The Panel quoted and relied heavily on paragraph 1.16 which states *'the RSS must not identify specific sites as suitable for development'*.

- 3.4 However the Consortium would disagree with the Panel's application of this policy statement because a policy which relates to the general extent of a green belt is not a policy which is identifying specific sites as suitable for development. Neither is establishing the identification of areas of land to be safeguarded for future development a process which is identifying specific sites as suitable for development.
- 3.5 PPS 11 provides at Annex A, policy and guidance on topics to be covered by the RSS. Under the heading '*Green Belt*' it indicates that the relevant document/material to be covered includes, Government Planning Policy Guidance for Green Belts [PPG2], see in particular paragraphs 1.4, 2.2 (a reference to paragraphs at PPG 2) and paragraphs 2.12 and 2.14 (a reference to PPG2 paragraphs which deal with safeguarded land and new green belts).
- 3.6 It is the Consortium's view that this policy and guidance statement indicates that RSS should deal with establishing the general extent of green belts and the extent of safe guarded land. It is also the Consortium's view that the restriction on the use of an ordnance survey map base to identify such areas (which is prohibited in relation to sites suitable for development) is not a prohibition which extends to the issue of fixing the general extent of a green belt.
- 3.7 The Panel also expressed the view that the issue of identifying the amount of housing and employment land to be allocated to York is made more difficult '*because of the as yet unknown environment constraint associated with establishing a firm green belt boundary and identifying land for development within York*'.
- 3.8 It seems from this that the Panel are accepting that the issue of the environmental capacity of York is one which is directly linked to the form and scale of the green belt yet the Panel recommendations do not indicate that these two matters should be addressed together but rather the text of the Panel Report suggests that they might be considered separately and within different timescales.

- 3.9 It is also the Consortium's view that the Panel misconceive the policy needs of RSS in respect of the York Green Belt when they emphasise the need to define the inner boundary. The Consortium's view is that the level of safeguarded land now required means that the general extent of the green belt is now different from that required in 1980. It is not simply an issue of defining the inner boundary, it is a requirement to re-define the general extent of the York Green Belt.
- 3.10 Nor is it clear what form the Panel's alternative approach of further consultation would entail. They do not make it clear whether that approach would be conducted within the current RSS framework or as a selective review.
- 3.11 The Panel seem to be indicating that there is a choice of methods for resolving the problem, one of which might be conducted at regional level as opposed to a process controlled by City of York Council.

#### **4.0 Consortium's Analysis**

- 4.1 The Consortium have no confidence in the capacity of the City of York Council to prioritise and address this matter. The York Green Belt has essentially been an unresolved issue for 50 years and the current local government administration for York has had over 10 years to address the matter, during which time it effectively has made no progress at all.
- 4.2 The Consortium considers that a regional based process should be explored and promoted at the time the Secretary of State commences the consultation on her proposed changes to the submitted RSS. That consultation will take place during the summer of this year.
- 4.3 The Consortium regards the legal issues surrounding the interpretation and application of policy in respect of the RSS and green belt needs to be given some attention. If the Panel recommendation is followed by the Secretary of State, it is

likely such proposals would justify a High Court Challenge against the adoption of the RSS.

- 4.4 It is considered that the prospects of a High Court Challenge might be a spring board to encourage the Secretary of State to look at referring the issue of the York Green Belt for a further consultation led by the Regional Assembly. It is not clear whether there is process to do this under the auspices of the current RSS procedure or whether that would be launched as a separate review process that specifically concentrated on the issues of the environmental capacity of York and the general extent of its green belt and provision of safeguarded land.
- 4.5 The Consortium's firm view is that an approach led by the Regional Assembly is likely to be more effective and more objective than any process which is handled by the City of York through the LDF process.

## **5.0 Conclusion and Recommendation**

- 5.1 The Consortium considers that these are prime facie grounds for promoting a review of the general extent of the York Green Belt through an RSS process.
- 5.2 The Consortium believe the prospect of a review will have broad appeal in that it would be an approach to promote a process to resolve the general extent of the green belt rather than to promote a specific solution. That prospect is potentially as enticing to those looking to preserve the green belt as it is to those looking for change.
- 5.3 The framework would allow the Consortium to promote the specific solution on the lines of the proposal promoted at the RSS Examination.
- 5.4 The request for a review need to be promoted through a consultation response to the Secretary of State in the RSS proposed changes Consultation which will follow in July/August.

- 5.5 It is considered that the consultation response should be settled by Counsel, so as to display the 'threat' of a High Court Challenge against the RSS if this policy issue is not properly addressed, is clearly signalled.
- 5.6 The Consortium is seeking funding for:-
- The drafting of a Consultation Response by Counsel to promote a review through RSS.
  - The promotion of the proposal review to a broad spectrum of support for tits submission by way of a Consultation Response.
- 5.7 The overall estimated fee requirement is £7000-£8000 and it is proposed to seek contributions from individual backers being landowners and developers.
- 5.8 These funds will allow both the Consultation response to be prepared to give maximum impact in the Consultation Process and to facilitate the conversing of a broad spectrum of support for that proposal.

**Appendix 1**

**Extract from Panel Report**

Belts exist in the Region around the West Yorkshire and South Yorkshire conurbations. However, these are not proposed for review nor do they have such fundamental unresolved boundary issues and hence these do not need to appear as a proposal of RSS on the Key Diagram. Figure 4.2 of RSS already shows the three Green Belt areas mentioned in Policy YH9A. Having said that, the present extent of the Green Belt should be shown on the Environment Context Diagram<sup>4</sup>.

- 13.67 NYCC argued that Policy Y1 should include firm guidance on the extent of Green Belt for York. CYC points out that the lack of an inner boundary has led to implications for an acceptable level of housing growth (which is a matter discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5 of this Report). Indeed Persimmon Homes, amongst others, was keen to see the inner boundary defined as soon as possible. However, there were various suggestions as to how this was to be done in RSS. Persimmon Homes put forward suggested wording for a policy. All were agreed that there is a need for inner boundaries that will endure beyond the period of this RSS.
- 13.68 YHA had originally proposed to save Policy E8 of the North Yorkshire Structure Plan<sup>5</sup> to provide continuity. It is our view that this is not a firm enough approach for this important matter and RSS should have its own policy regarding the general extent of the Green Belt in the York area. Policy YH9 is basis for GB policy and this (in its revised form as an ENV policy) should include a specific commitment to complete the confirmed Green Belt for York. YHA accepted this at the Examination and offered a suggested wording to cover the point (Document SDE 45). This looks to boundaries being established through a LDF document prepared by CYC.
- 13.69 George Wright argues that this is a strategic issue which goes beyond the administrative boundaries of CYC, and cannot be left to CYC's LDF/LDDs alone. Mr Wright argued that the outer boundary was fragmented amongst several district councils where different approaches were sometimes applied. A wider review of the York Green Belt could be promoted to aid consistency, which would represent the exceptional circumstances looked for in PPG2 to justify a review. Both inner and outer boundaries of the Green Belt could lie within the administrative boundaries of York City. This would allow for innovative approaches to new development in or close to York, such as urban extensions. George Wright argued that urban extensions would be incompatible with a conventional Green Belt.
- 13.70 George Wright proposed that RSS should be revised to include an inset diagram for York which gave a fairly detailed, albeit not Ordnance Survey map-based representation of a Green Belt boundary for York, together with a detailed description and wording for a new Policy YH9A. This was supported by a privately sponsored Sustainability Appraisal (Documents SDE 22, SDE 23 and SDE 24).

<sup>4</sup> See Recommendation 9.1 iii).

<sup>5</sup> North Yorkshire Structure Plan – NYCC. (CDL-R 113)

- 13.71 We find all of the contributions stimulating. The issue is clearly not an easy one to resolve, with several differing views as to how far RSS could or should go. The starting point would seem to be PPG2. The advice here is that

*"Structure plans provide the strategic policy context for planning at local level. The general extent of Green Belts has been fixed through the approval of structure plans."*<sup>6</sup>

And goes on to say

*"Up-to-date approved boundaries are essential, to provide certainty as to where Green Belt policies do and do not apply and to enable the proper consideration of future development options. The mandatory requirement for district-wide local plans, introduced by the Planning and Compensation Act 1991, will ensure that the definition of detailed boundaries is completed."*<sup>7</sup>

- 13.72 Also relevant is the advice given in PPS11<sup>8</sup> on Locational Specificity. Here it says:

*1.16 RSS must not identify specific sites as suitable for development. The DPD is the place for site allocations. Consideration of specific sites could dominate and delay the production of a RSS revision and cause unnecessary blight. The Examination process is not suitable for the hearing of site-specific representations.*

*1.17 RSS should, however, establish the locational criteria appropriate to regionally or sub-regionally significant housing, business, retail and leisure uses, or to the location of major new inward investment sites. RSS should only do so where LDDs need this strategic framework. The broad location of such development may be identified in RSS itself. By "broad location" is meant the area of search suitable for the development in question, consistent with criteria set out in RSS, within which a number of suitable sites may exist. Broad locations may include town or city centres.*

- 13.73 That is, the guidance on how to deal with Green Belts looks to structure plans and district-wide development plans; but both of these policy mechanisms have been superseded by the new development plan system of RSS and LDFs/LDDs. The structure plan, being on a county scale, perhaps offered more scope to be more specific on a Key Diagram than RSS. Indeed, RSS is positively discouraged from being any more specific than a general location or area of search. We acknowledge that an Inset Diagram on a larger scale than Figure 4.2 would offer scope for a more detailed presentation, but this was not part of the consultation for RSS. If this was to be the preferred way forward we could recommend that further consultation on this specific subject should be undertaken and that this part of RSS should not be adopted. The alternative, as discussed above, would be to look to an appropriate LDF/LDD.

<sup>6</sup> Planning Policy Guidance 2: Green Belts, paragraph 2.3 – Department of the Environment, January 1995. (CDL-CG 3)

<sup>7</sup> Planning Policy Guidance 2: Green Belts, paragraph 2.4 – Department of the Environment, January 1995. (CDL-CG 3)

<sup>8</sup> Planning Policy Statement 11: Regional Spatial Strategies - ODPM, 2004. (CDL-CG18)

- 13.74 If the whole of the Green Belt were to be reviewed then either of these courses of action would be appropriate but there was no other support for the view put forward by George Wright. We are not persuaded that this is necessary because of the lack of substantial evidence to support the contention that Green Belt policy is applied inconsistently by the local authorities who administer the parts outside the boundaries of the City of York. That is, we accept that only the inner boundary has to be defined.
- 13.75 Alongside this more general argument was the one raised by EH, and others, over the main purpose of the York Green Belt. It seems to be agreed that the main purposes are to preserve the setting and special character of historic York and to safeguard the countryside from encroachment. However, as discussed above, the work on analysing the setting of the historic city has not been undertaken in the degree of detail looked for by EH. This would appropriately evolve through the LDF/LDD process. Furthermore, the broader point about the form of future development at York, perhaps as urban extensions, was not discussed in detail at the Examination.
- 13.76 Therefore, and whilst acknowledging the detailed work undertaken by George Wright, we consider that they do not have enough information on, or know the public reaction to, any form of Green Belt boundaries or the future shape of the urban form for York. This is particularly so as there has been no public consultation on the detailed proposals and Inset Map which were tabled by George Wright. To remit this aspect back for further consultation is likely to incur further delay. It is our view that the quickest means of resolving this matter is for Policy YH9 (recast as an ENV policy)<sup>9</sup> to include specific requirements to draw up an inner boundary through an LDF, and for this to be shown on the Key Diagram and noted in the supporting text for the new ENV policy. We consider it is imperative this work is undertaken as a priority.

<sup>9</sup> See Recommendation 3.21 in Chapter 3 of this Report



## POLICY YH9: Green belts

- A The Green Belts in North, South and West Yorkshire have a valuable role in supporting urban renaissance, transformation and concentration, as well as conserving countryside, and their general extent as shown on the Key Diagram should not be changed.
- B Localised reviews of Green Belt boundaries may be necessary in some places to deliver the Core Approach and Sub Area policies.
- C The detailed inner boundaries of the Green Belt around York should be defined in order to establish long term development limits that safeguard the special character and setting of the historic city. The boundaries must take account of the levels of growth set out in this RSS and must also endure beyond the Plan period.
- D A strategic review of the West Yorkshire Green Belt may be required to deliver longer term housing growth as set out in Table 12.1 in locations that deliver the Core Approach and the strategic patterns of development set out in policy LCR1E.
- E Green Belt reviews should also consider whether exceptional circumstances exist to include additional land as Green Belt.

## OUTCOMES

The general extent of the Region's Green Belt has not changed.

Green Belt boundaries allow sustainable development to be delivered in accordance with the Core Approach.

Green Belt around York has been defined and the setting of the historic city protected

## INDICATORS

Net change in Area of Green Belt in the Region

How many Local Authorities have undertaken a Green Belt Review and why

Whether the Green Belt around York has been defined in an LDF.

## LEAD ROLES

Local authorities

## MAIN MECHANISMS

LDFs

- 2.62 The general extent of the Green Belts in the Region is shown on the Key Diagram. In general the Region's Green Belts have helped to achieve the aims set out in paragraph 15 of PPG2, and implementation of the Plan should not require any change to their general extent. However, there may be a more specific and localised need to reconsider the extent of Green Belt to meet identifiable development needs for which locations in Regional and Sub Regional Cities and Towns are not available and for which alternative sites would be significantly less sustainable. Any such changes ought to be considered in the context of policies YH1-YH7, and is allowed for by policy YH9B.
- 2.63 The detailed inner boundary to the York Green Belt, and parts of the outer boundary, have not been designated in a development plan. This is therefore covered by policies YH9C and Y1C1.<sup>2</sup>
- 2.64 The Plan proposes significant growth in the Leeds City Region, including increased housebuilding in West Yorkshire from 2008 onwards. It is possible that the most sustainable locations to accommodate some of this development may currently be within the Green Belt. This will have to be considered through the preparation of LDFs, taking account of policies YH4-YH7 and LCR1E. The local authorities in West Yorkshire are encouraged to work together and with the

<sup>2</sup> Policies YH9C and Y1C1 replace Policy 06 of the North Yorkshire Structure Plan extended under transitional provisions of Schedule 8 to the Planning Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

## Section 6

# York

### POLICY Y1: York sub area policy

Plans, strategies, investment decisions and programmes for the York sub area should:

#### A Roles and functions of places

1. Ensure the roles and function of places in the York sub area complement and support those described in the Leeds City Region
2. Develop the role of York as a Sub Regional City and support the roles of Selby and Malton as Principal Towns

#### B Economy

1. Diversify and grow York as a key driver of the Leeds City Region economy by encouraging the business and financial services sector, knowledge and science-based industries, leisure and retail services and the evening economy, and further developing its tourism sector
2. Spread the benefits of York's economic success to other parts of the sub area and ensure that all members of the community have access to employment opportunities
3. Deliver economic growth at Selby and Malton in line with their roles as Principal Towns
4. Identify and safeguard a site for the Spallation project, in the vicinity of Selby

#### C Environment

1. In the City of York LDF, define the detailed boundaries of the outstanding sections of the outer boundary of the York Green Belt about 6 miles from York city centre and the inner boundary in line with policy YH9C.
2. Protect and enhance the nationally significant historical and environmental character of York, including its historic setting, views of the Minster and important open areas
3. Protect and enhance the particular biodiversity, landscape character and environmental quality of the York sub area – including the 'Vales' area, Humberhead Levels area, the Derwent Valley area, the Wolds, Howardian Hills AONB, and protect the integrity of internationally important biodiversity sites
4. Help to mitigate flooding through proactive planning and management and provide appropriate protection, especially in York and Selby
5. Avoid depleting the Sherwood Sandstone aquifer
6. Improve air quality, particularly along main road corridors in York (based on AQMAs)

Continued

Figure 6.2: York sub area context diagram



# Yorkshire & Humber Plan Key Diagram



# ANNEXE II xi

RSS (PARTIAL REVOCATION) ORDER

2013

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

2013 No. 117

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING, ENGLAND

The Regional Strategy for Yorkshire and Humber (Partial Revocation) Order 2013

<i>Made</i>	- - - -	<i>24th January 2013</i>
<i>Laid before Parliament</i>		<i>29th January 2013</i>
<i>Coming into force</i>	- -	<i>22nd February 2013</i>

The Secretary of State, in exercise of the powers conferred by section 109(3) of the Localism Act 2011(1), makes the following Order:

**Citation, commencement and application**

1.—(1) This Order may be cited as the Regional Strategy for Yorkshire and Humber (Partial Revocation) Order 2013 and shall come into force on 22nd February 2013.

(2) This Order applies in relation to England only.

**Partial revocation of Regional Strategy**

2.—(1) The Regional Strategy for Yorkshire and Humber comprises—

- (a) the regional spatial strategy for the region (“the RSS”)(2); and
- (b) the regional economic strategy for the region (“the RES”)(3).

(2) The Regional Strategy for Yorkshire and Humber is revoked except for—

- 
- (1) 2011 c. 20.
  - (2) The Yorkshire and Humber Plan Regional Spatial Strategy to 2026, published in May 2008 as required by section 1 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (c.5). Under Part 5 of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 (c.20), section 1 of the 2004 Act was repealed and the RSS became part of the regional strategy for the region from 1st April 2010. Part 5 of the 2009 Act is partially amended and partially repealed by sections 109 and 237 of, and paragraphs 18 and 19 of Schedule 8 and Part 16 of Schedule 25 to, the Localism Act 2011 (c.20). These amendments and repeals took effect on 15th November 2011, except for the repeal of sections 70(5), 82(1) and (2) which will be commenced on a day to be appointed. Section 83 of the 2009 Act was repealed by section 30(3) of, and Schedule 6 to, the Public Bodies Act 2011 (c.24).
  - (3) The Regional Economic Strategy for Yorkshire & Humber 2006–2015, published in 2006 by Yorkshire Forward, the Yorkshire and Humber Regional Development Agency, as required by section 7 of the Regional Development Agencies Act 1998 (c.45). Section 7 of the 1998 Act was substituted by section 83 of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 (c.20) and is repealed by section 109(7) of, and paragraph 2 of Schedule 8 to, the Localism Act 2011 (c.20) on a day to be appointed. Under Part 5 of the 2009 Act, the RES became part of the regional strategy for the region from 1st April 2010. Part 5 of the 2009 Act is partially amended and partially repealed as set out at (b) above.

- (a) the policies of the RSS set out in the Schedule to this Order ("the RSS York Green Belt policies"); and
- (b) the Key Diagram of the RSS insofar as it illustrates the RSS York Green Belt policies and the general extent of the Green Belt around the City of York.

Signed by authority of the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

24th January 2013

*Nick Boles*  
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State  
Department for Communities and Local  
Government

## SCHEDULE

Article 2

### RSS York Green Belt policies

#### **POLICY YH9: Green belts**

C The detailed inner boundaries of the Green Belt around York should be defined in order to establish long term development limits that safeguard the special character and setting of the historic city.

#### **POLICY Y1: York sub area policy**

Plans, strategies, investment decisions and programmes for the York sub area should:

##### C Environment

1. In the City of York LDF, define the detailed boundaries of the outstanding sections of the outer boundary of the York Green Belt about 6 miles from York city centre and the inner boundary in line with policy YH9C.

2. Protect and enhance the nationally significant historical and environmental character of York, including its historic setting, views of the Minster and important open areas.

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## EXPLANATORY NOTE

*(This note is not part of the Order)*

Section 109 of the Localism Act 2011<sup>(4)</sup> abolished the regional planning tier by repealing Part 5 of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009<sup>(5)</sup> (which only applied in relation to England). This includes the removal of the responsible regional authorities. Section 109 also made provision to revoke or partially revoke, by order, the eight existing regional strategies.

This Order makes use of those powers to partially revoke the regional strategy for Yorkshire and Humber, which comprises The Yorkshire and Humber Plan Regional Spatial Strategy to 2026 ("the RSS") and the Regional Economic Strategy for Yorkshire & Humber 2006-2015. Policies in the RSS which relate to the Green Belt around the City of York are retained. The Key Diagram from the RSS is retained insofar as it illustrates the retained York Green Belt policies and the general extent of the Green Belt around the City of York. The Key Diagram can be found after page 214 of the RSS. A copy can be obtained from the Planning Directorate, Department for Communities and Local Government, Eland House, Bressenden Place, London, SW1E 5DU.

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<sup>(4)</sup> 2011 c. 20.

<sup>(5)</sup> 2009 c. 20.

# ANNEXE II xii

RSS (PARTIAL REVOCATION) ORDER 2013

EXPLANATORY NOTE.

**EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM TO  
THE REGIONAL STRATEGY FOR YORKSHIRE & HUMBER (PARTIAL  
REVOCATION) ORDER 2013**

**2013 No. 117**

1. This explanatory memorandum has been prepared by the Department for Communities and Local Government and is laid before Parliament by Command of Her Majesty.  
  
This memorandum contains information for the Joint Committee on Statutory Instruments.
2. **Purpose of the instruments**
  - 2.1 This Order revokes the Regional Strategy for Yorkshire and Humber, **except for policies which relate to the Green Belt around the City of York.**
3. **Matters of special interest to the Joint Committee on Statutory Instruments**
  - 3.1 None.
4. **Legislative Context**
  - 4.1 The Localism Act 2011 provides for the removal of the regional planning tier in a two-stage process. The first stage, to remove Part 5 of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009, which contains the regional planning framework, including Leaders' Boards, took effect when the Localism Act received Royal Assent on 15 November 2011. This prevents further strategies being created. The Act also provides the Secretary of State with an enabling power to revoke or partially revoke by order the existing regional strategies outside London, constituting the second stage of the process.
  - 4.2 This instrument relates to the second stage of the process in respect of the Yorkshire and Humber region by partially revoking the Regional Strategy for Yorkshire and Humber, which comprises the Yorkshire and Humber Plan Regional Spatial Strategy to 2026 (published in May 2008) and the Regional Economic Strategy for Yorkshire & Humber 2006-2015 (published in 2006). It is made under the powers in section 109 of the Localism Act 2011.
5. **Territorial Extent and Application**
  - 5.1 This instrument applies to England only.

## 6. European Convention on Human Rights

- 6.1 As the instrument is subject to negative resolution procedure and does not amend primary legislation, no statement is required.

## 7. Policy background

- What is being done and why

7.1 The Coalition Government commenced a planning reform programme, which included measures to decentralise the planning system so that powers are passed down to local councils and the local communities that they represent. The Coalition Agreement makes clear the Government's wish to promote decentralisation and democratic engagement and to end the era of top-down government by giving new powers to local councils, communities, neighbourhoods and individuals.

7.2 The removal of the regional planning tier is an integral part of decentralisation and was a clear commitment in the Coalition Agreement, which stated that:

*"We will rapidly abolish Regional Spatial Strategies and return decision-making powers on housing and planning to local councils".*

7.3 Currently, regional strategies provide the statutory regional framework for development and investment across a region, including setting targets for housing delivery that apply to constituent local councils. Since their creation by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, regional strategies, sitting alongside local plans prepared by local councils and any saved county structure plan policies, form the statutory development plan for an area. This means that they set the framework for local plan-making and local councils in the region must ensure that their local plan is in general conformity with the regional strategy at the time their local plan is submitted for examination. It is also important because planning applications should be determined in accordance with the development plan (which includes the regional strategy for the local planning authority's region) unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

7.4 The abolition of the Regional Strategy for Yorkshire and Humber would enable a locally led planning system comprising local and neighbourhood plans and giving local councils responsibility for strategic planning in the region. To support a locally-led approach to strategic planning, section 33A of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (inserted by section 110 of the Localism Act 2011) introduces a statutory duty to co-operate. The duty requires local

councils and other public bodies to work together constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis when planning for cross-boundary matters in their local and marine plans.

- 7.5 The abolition of regional strategies makes the local plan the keystone of the planning system. In the absence of regional strategies, the statutory development plan comprises any saved county structure plan or local plan policies and adopted development plan documents. The statutory development plan may in future include any adopted neighbourhood plans that are prepared under the powers inserted into Part III of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 by the Localism Act 2011.
- 7.6 This Order fulfils part of the Coalition Agreement commitment for this region by revoking the Regional Strategy for Yorkshire and Humber, except for policies which relate to the Green Belt around the City of York.

## **8. Consultation outcome**

- 8.1 Regional strategies are plans for the purpose of the European Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment, known as the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive. In accordance with the Directive, the Secretary of State carried out two consultations on the environmental impacts of the revocation of the Regional Strategy for Yorkshire and Humber. The consultations ran from 20 October 2011 until 20 January 2012 and again from 28 September 2012 until 26 November 2012. The second consultation considered reasonable alternatives to revocation, including partial revocation.
- 8.2 The statutory consultees on this proposal included English Heritage, Environment Agency and Natural England and their equivalent bodies in the Devolved Administrations. The environmental reports were published for consultation on the Department's website and the Department also emailed organisations including local authorities, parish councils, non-governmental organisations and professional bodies which have expressed an interest in the proposal to revoke regional strategies, to inform them that the environmental reports were out for consultation.
- 8.3 The Secretary of State received 48 combined responses specifically on the proposed revocation of the Regional Strategy for Yorkshire and Humber in response to the two consultations which took place on:

20 October 2011 until 20 January 2012

28 September 2012 until 26 November 2012

- 9 from statutory consultation bodies
- 7 from local planning authorities and public agencies
- 3 parish councils
- 9 from NGOs and local pressure groups
- 5 industry representative bodies
- 9 developers and planning consultants
- 6 individuals and MPs

8.4 Of these 48 responses, 19% were statutory consultation bodies (the three English statutory consultation bodies and their equivalent bodies in the Devolved Administrations), 15% from local planning authorities and public agencies, 6% from parish councils, 19% from non-governmental organisations and local pressure groups, 10% from industry representative bodies, 19% from developers and planning consultants and 13% from individuals and MPs.

8.5 The responses to the two environmental reports on the environmental impact of the proposed revocation of the Regional Strategy for Yorkshire and Humber identified the following issues to be of strategic significance:

- Imbalance between water demand and supply
- Flooding, coastal erosion and climate change, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and renewable energy
- Historical reductions in biodiversity and natural and semi-natural habitats
- Erosion of historic assets including landscapes
- Air quality, especially on main transport routes
- Pressures on landscape character
- Waste and mineral management
- Scale and distribution of housing development
- Issues associated with planning around the boundaries of the Yorkshire and Humber's two National Parks
- Strategic planning for the accommodation needs of Travelling Show people and Gypsy and Travellers communities
- Need to revoke regional strategies rapidly so to deliver the localism agenda
- The importance of policies in the Yorkshire and Humber Plan Regional Spatial Strategy to 2026 relating to the Green Belt around the City of York

8.6 The Secretary of State has taken into account the assessment of the environmental considerations in the Environmental Report and opinions expressed in response to consultation on the report. Taking account of these considerations, the Secretary of State has decided to retain the following parts of the Yorkshire and Humber Plan Regional Spatial Strategy to 2026:

- policy YH9: Green belts - title and first sentence of part C;

- policy Y1: York sub area policy - title, opening line and paragraphs 1 and 2 of part C; and
- the Key Diagram, insofar as it illustrates the retained policies and the general extent of the Green Belt around the City of York.

At present there is no adopted local plan for the City of York which gives effect to these policies. In the short to medium term, revocation of these policies would effectively remove the statutory basis for the York Green Belt, its general extent and purpose to prevent harm to the historic character of the City. The longer the period between revocation and the adoption of local plans which give effect to the Green Belt policies set out above, the greater the opportunity for the cumulative effects of development on the Green Belt to have a significant negative effect on the special character and setting of York. A number of consultees expressed similar concerns.

- 8.7 With the above exception, the assessment found that there are no policies in the Regional Strategy for Yorkshire and Humber, where the act of revocation will cause a significant negative effect whilst retaining the same policy will maintain significant environmental benefit. The Secretary of State has therefore decided to partially revoke the Regional Strategy for Yorkshire and Humber, retaining the Green Belt policies set out above.
- 8.8 A Post Adoption Statement summarising how environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan to partially revoke, including the reasons for partial revocation, in light of other reasonable alternatives, and information on monitoring has been prepared. Details of the consultation and representations received, and the Department's response to them are also set out in the Post Adoption Statement which will be available on the Department's website shortly:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-communities-and-local-government>.

## 9. Guidance

- 9.1 The legislation relates to the partial revocation of the Regional Strategy for Yorkshire and Humber and does not make new provision for which guidance is necessary. The abolition of regional strategies forms part of a new, localised approach to strategic planning, which is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.

## 10. Impact

- 10.1 The Government believes that the impact of this policy will fall upon local councils. The abolition of the Regional Strategy for Yorkshire

and Humber (with the exception of the York Green Belt policies set out above) places the responsibility for strategic planning upon local councils. As such, the impact of the legislation is likely to be felt by local planning authorities and other public bodies prescribed under regulations<sup>1</sup>. The role of businesses, charities and voluntary bodies in the plan-making process is unaltered by this legislation.

- 10.2 As discussed, the impact on the public sector is likely to be felt by local planning authorities and other public bodies prescribed under the regulations as subject to the duty to co-operate. Local councils in the region are now responsible for planning for cross-boundary, strategic matters in local plans through the duty to co-operate. This means that they will need to take leadership by actively co-operating with other authorities when planning for strategic matters. While this gives local councils new responsibilities, these responsibilities respond to new freedoms for councils. The new responsibilities for local councils should in practice reflect work that they already undertake to work with other councils and public bodies when preparing their local plans. Similarly, other public bodies prescribed under the duty to co-operate will also be required to engage with local planning authorities in the plan-making process and again, this reflects work they already undertake. While there may be costs incurred by these bodies it is considered that this will be offset by a shift in the balance of engagement activity towards the start of the plan preparation/review process rather than at the end.
- 10.3 The Department has further assessed the impacts of the revocation of the Regional Strategy for Yorkshire and Humber and reasonable alternatives to revocation, including partial revocation, through the Strategic Environmental Assessment process. A Post Adoption Statement, covering that process, will be published on the Departmental website shortly.
- 10.4 In accordance with section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the equality impacts of the partial revocation of the Regional Strategy for Yorkshire and Humber have also been examined by an Equality Statement assessing the potential impacts of abolition on groups with protected characteristics, as defined under the Equality Act 2010, in particular Gypsies and Travellers. Due to the mitigation within the planning system, provided by planning policy and legislation alongside the local plan preparation and examination process, the Equality Statement concludes that there would be no adverse impacts on those with protected characteristics.

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<sup>1</sup> Regulation 4 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012/767, as amended by the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012/2613.

**11. Regulating small business**

11.1 The legislation does not apply to small business.

**12. Monitoring & review**

12.1 The Post Adoption Statement on the environmental assessment process conducted on the Regional Strategy for Yorkshire and the Humber sets out onward monitoring procedures for:

- i. significant effects identified in the assessment that may give rise to irreversible damage, and where appropriate, relevant mitigating measures that can be taken; and
- ii. uncertain effects where monitoring would enable preventative or mitigating measures to be undertaken.

12.2 Further details on the monitoring proposed is set out in section 6 of the Post Adoption Statement, which will be available on the Departmental website shortly.

12.3. Data will be available from the Planning Inspectorate on the submission, examination and adoption of development plan documents. This will enable any review of the success of a localised approach to strategic planning, including the effectiveness of the duty to co-operate, to take place.

**13. Contact**

13.1 Sharmila Meadows at the Department for Communities & Local Government. Tel: 0303 4441673 or email: [Sharmila.Meadows@communities.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Sharmila.Meadows@communities.gsi.gov.uk) can answer any queries regarding the instrument.

# ANNEXE III

SECONDARY POLICY  
BACKGROUND MATERIAL.

# ANNEXE III i

NYCC – GREEN BELTS DISCUSSION PAPER

1981

CB/091

# GREEN BELTS IN NORTH YORKSHIRE

## A Discussion Paper



March 1981

R. Cooper Kenyon  
County Planning Officer

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1. INTRODUCTION

Within North Yorkshire there is a Green Belt around York and the outer boundary of the West Yorkshire Green Belt extends into Harrogate and Selby Districts (Fig. 1). During the preparation of the Structure Plan, the County Council considered substantial extensions to join these two green belts, and proposed to designate a new green belt near Cleveland. These major additions are not included in the approved Structure Plan which mainly confirms the existing green belts, although some adjustments to the boundaries will be necessary.

This paper takes the process a stage further. It reviews the outer boundary of both green belts and suggests some revisions. During the next few weeks these proposals will be discussed with local authorities and other organisations before any decisions are taken.

## 2. WHAT IS A GREEN BELT?

A green belt is an area where there is a strong presumption against most forms of development, though certain activities which must take place in the countryside may be permitted. This is clearly stated in Policy E9 of the Structure Plan:-

"Planning permission within green belt areas will normally be granted only for the erection of new buildings or for the change of use or redevelopment of existing buildings which are necessary in connection with the following land uses:

- (i) Agriculture and forestry;
- (ii) Outdoor sport and recreation;
- (iii) Cemeteries or institutions standing in extensive grounds; and
- (iv) Other uses appropriate in a rural area."

Therefore land within a green belt should retain its open character, but this does not necessarily mean either that the landscape will be improved or that the countryside will become more accessible for recreational purposes. These are related issues which may be considered later when the green belt has been established. When reviewing the outer boundary, important areas of open countryside have been included within the green belt where possible.

New housing in villages which lie within the green belt is limited to minor infilling, and industrial development is not usually permitted as this might encourage further housing. It is important to maintain the vitality of rural areas, and a limited amount of housing and industrial development may be permitted on new sites in certain villages. These are referred to as "inset" villages. They are excluded from the green belt and a boundary around the village indicates the limit of any future development. "Inset" villages are discussed in more detail in Section 6.

### 3. AIMS OF THE GREEN BELT

The purpose of the green belt is primarily to guide the development of towns and villages to retain the open appearance of the countryside near the urban areas. The aims of the policy are:

- (i) to regulate the size and shape of urban areas in order to prevent uncontrolled growth,
- (ii) to prevent the existing settlements merging together,
- (iii) to preserve areas of open land extending into the urban areas from the countryside which have an existing or potential recreational or amenity value,
- (iv) to preserve easy access to open country and outdoor recreation in pleasant surroundings.

The importance of these aims will vary from one part of the green belt to another. In some places the main purpose is to prevent villages merging with nearby towns and villages. Other sections of the green belt are intended to protect important stretches of open countryside near urban areas from development. There is also a different emphasis between the aims of the West Yorkshire and York Green Belts. One of the main themes in the Structure Plan is the need to reduce the pace and scale of development in North Yorkshire particularly where these are determined largely by externally generated pressures and demands. The West Yorkshire Green Belt should help to achieve this by restricting development in the areas adjacent to West Yorkshire. The York Green Belt is not intended to restrict development within the York area, although it is anticipated that the future rate of growth will be lower than in recent years. The policies are mainly intended to protect the special character of the city, and encourage a more compact urban form.

#### 4. DEFINING THE OUTER BOUNDARY

The review of the outer boundary for each green belt has been carried out in two stages. The first stage has been to decide whether any settlements or important areas of land beyond the green belt should be included, or alternatively whether some areas should be excluded from the present green belt. The situation to the west of York is different because there is no generally accepted green belt boundary, so a new boundary has been suggested. The second stage has been to ensure that the boundary would be easily identified on the ground.

A number of factors have been taken into account when considering the general location of the green belt, and the need for any changes. The most important consideration has been the extent to which existing green belts already achieve the aims mentioned in Section 3. One indication that a review may be necessary, is the rate of growth in villages beyond the green belt. Rapid growth in these locations may be due to restrictions imposed by green belt policies, or there could be many other explanations such as changing attitudes among the commuters to West Yorkshire and York. A high rate of development does not necessarily mean that the green belt policies have been ineffective, and that an extension to the green belt is required. In some cases development may have been consistent with planning policies for the area. Nevertheless an assessment of recent growth rates in villages beyond the green belt has provided a useful starting point for the analysis.

It is possible to identify a few villages where there has not been many changes recently but which may be subject to development pressures in the future. This situation could arise as sites in nearby villages are developed or in response to changing travel patterns brought about for example, by new roads being constructed. If these villages lie within the sphere of

influence of York or West Yorkshire, and are relatively close to the present green belt, then a small extension to include the village has been suggested.

Developers will invariably be attracted to villages on the edge of the green belt because of the restrictions within the green belt. Therefore most villages which are immediately adjacent to the present boundary, or bisected by it, have been included within the new green belt. Wherever possible the new boundary has been drawn to minimise this type of problem arising in the future.

One of the main aims of the green belt policy is to prevent settlements from merging and to maintain open areas between towns and villages. The definition of the outer boundary provides only limited opportunities to achieve this aim. Around York the inner boundary is more important in this respect. However where there is a possibility of settlements on the edge of the green belt merging, the existing open gaps have been included in the new green belt. Similarly stretches of open countryside which are important for recreation, or which contribute to the amenity of the area, have been included where they are close to the present green belt boundary.

The policies in the Structure Plan clearly state that the West Yorkshire and York green belts should remain separate. It would be undesirable if only a small gap remained between these two green belts since this would probably attract unnecessary development. This was a further constraint, particularly when defining the new green belt boundary to the south west of York.

When the specific areas of change had been identified, the next step was to relate the green belt boundary to physical features on the ground such as roads, railways, streams, woodlands, etc. The suitability of the present boundaries was also reviewed in those areas where no other changes were required.

## 5. THE PROPOSED GREEN BELTS

In the modifications to the Structure Plan the Secretary of State specifically excluded the possibility of designating a green belt in Craven District, so the West Yorkshire Green Belt starts at the boundary of Harrogate District near the Dales National Park (Fig. 2). There is no evidence of major expansion in the villages to the north of the green belt between the Dales and Harrogate town. In some villages the population has declined. These settlements are not easily accessible to West Yorkshire, and therefore no major changes are proposed, though some adjustments are necessary to identify the precise boundary on the ground.

There is a large area on land between the present green belt boundary and the built up area of Harrogate. This includes the attractive areas of the Crimple valley and Pannal Ash. To the west of the town there are important recreational areas near Oak Beck and towards Valley Gardens. It is considered that these areas should be included within the green belt. This would help to maintain the separate identity of Pannal, though the village would be excluded from the green belt.

It is not possible to define the precise green belt boundary around Harrogate because the District Council are preparing a District Plan which will allocate more land for housing and industrial development. Some alternative proposals will soon be available for discussion, and the results of these consultations will affect the green belt boundary. In the meantime comments are requested on the general proposals outlined above.

The area between Harrogate and Knaresborough will remain a green belt.

Between Knaresborough and Wetherby, the village of Spofforth lies on the boundary of the green belt. The village has steadily expanded, and a significant proportion of the residents work in West Yorkshire. Recently there has been pressure for further development. The village is very dispersed and if it was "inset" into the green belt this would help to regulate future expansion. Therefore the Green Belt boundary should be moved further to the east.

Another pressure area is Kirk Deighton near Wetherby. Development has taken place within Wetherby and in the parish of Kirk Deighton adjacent to the town. Leeds City Council are considering allocating more land to the west of the town, and this indicates that more housing is required in this area. There remains only a small gap between Wetherby and Kirk Deighton which would benefit from green belt protection. If the green belt was extended immediately to the north of Kirk Deighton this could transfer development pressures to the nearby villages of North Deighton and Little Ribston. It is proposed to include these villages within the green belt, and use the River Nidd and the A1 trunk road as clearly defined boundaries.

In Selby District there are a number of villages immediately outside the green belt where housing development has taken place in response to demands arising largely from West Yorkshire. A small extension of the green belt to include villages such as Church Fenton and Monk Fryston would provide a greater degree of control for these villages, and help to achieve the Structure Plan aim of reducing the scale and pace of development (Fig. 3). To the east of Monk Fryston, along the A63, Hambleton and Thorpe Willoughby have expanded but it is not feasible to include both these villages as the green belt would then extend to the outskirts of Selby and this would conflict with the policies in the Structure Plan.

Selby District Council have prepared a local plan for Sherburn in Elmet and South Milford. It is not practical for this plan to review the green belt boundary without considering the broader implications outside the plan area. Therefore at present this local plan confirms the existing boundary.

In South Yorkshire the Secretary of State has approved extensions of the green belt eastwards to the Doncaster/Selby main railway line. He requires a compatible boundary to be adopted in the southern part of Selby District.

The route of the East Coast Main Line diversion together with the River Wharf provide a feasible and unmistakable boundary for the green belt in Selby though it is not ideal as Thorpe Willoughby would lie immediately outside the green belt. Nevertheless it seems to be the most suitable boundary. It would be inappropriate to extend the green belt to include Kellington, Eggborough and Whitley Bridge as the limited development which may take place in these villages is not compatible with the green belt restrictions. Therefore no changes are proposed to the green belt in this area.

The approved policy in the Structure Plan confirms that the City of York should be surrounded by a green belt extending about six miles from the city centre.

To the north of the city in Ryedale District the present extent of the green belt is generally acceptable. There has been no major development immediately outside the green belt and although some villages such as Sutton on the Forest and Easingwold attract York commuters, they are too far from the City to be included (Fig. 4).

In Hambleton District, Shipton is outside the green belt but there are many similarities to villages in Ryedale which are "inset" into the present green belt. It is five miles from the

city centre and there are good communications. One site has been allocated for future housing by the District Council and although at present there are constraints which restrict any major expansion the village may experience pressure for more housing as sites in nearby villages are developed. Therefore it is proposed to include Shipton in the green belt.

There is no generally accepted boundary for the green belt to the west of York, so it is necessary to start from first principles. Nether Poppleton and Upper Poppleton have steadily expanded during the past twenty years and there is now only a small gap between these villages and York. Although part of this area is reserved for road proposals, it should nevertheless be included within the green belt.

There has only been limited development to the west of York recently. Rufforth expanded during the 1960's and there could be future development pressures when the York and Rufforth by-passes are constructed. Therefore it is proposed to include this village in the green belt. To the south of York, Copmanthorpe and Bishopthorpe are commuter villages which should also be included. This will help to maintain the open areas between the villages and the City of York.

Appleton Roebuck is a more marginal case. Although the village has steadily expanded, access to York is by minor roads. If the village was included in the green belt this would produce an unnecessarily extensive green belt and leave a small gap between the York and West Yorkshire Green Belts. Therefore it is not proposed to include Appleton Roebuck in the green belt.

A significant proportion of residents in Escrick and Wheldrake work in York. The villages are easily accessible to the City, and it is considered that they should remain within the green belt. At present the green belt extends about 8 miles from the city centre

and includes the small villages of Stillingfleet, Kelfield and Thorganby. These are situated on minor roads and they are not primarily commuter villages. It is proposed to delete the green belt from this area. The existing policies of the District and County Councils will ensure that the present character of these villages is maintained and that no major development occurs.

The River Derwent forms the eastern boundary of the green belt and no changes are proposed.

6. INSET BOUNDARIES

Although there is a general presumption against most forms of development within the green belt, there are certain towns, villages and industrial estates within the area identified by the outer boundary of the green belt where significant further development may be permitted. These areas are excluded from the green belt.

The detailed green belt boundaries around these towns and villages depend primarily upon the specific sites which are allocated for development by District Councils in local plans. Members of the public and other organisations will have an opportunity to comment on these inset boundaries when the draft local plans are published. However it is useful to summarise the present position and the implications of the proposed extensions to the green belt.

During the past twenty years the present and former local authorities have defined some inset boundaries and these are shown for information (Figs. 2, 3 and 4). The boundaries around Sherburn in Elmet and South Milford have recently been reviewed by Selby District Council, and a discussion paper about future housing and industrial land allocations in the southern part of Ryedale District was circulated in November 1980. Similar proposals for Harrogate town will soon be available. Other local plans defining inset boundaries will be prepared during the next few years. A complete list of local plans is in the Development Plan Scheme.

If the proposals in this discussion paper are implemented a number of other villages would be "inset" into the green belt. Based on present policies and commitments, Pannal, Spofforth, Hambleton, Shipton, Bishopthorpe and Copmanthorpe should be inset villages, but it must be emphasised that this is a provisional list which may be reviewed as local plans are prepared.

Next Steps

This discussion paper has suggested some changes to the existing green belt, and briefly explained the reasons for these proposals. If you wish to either support or object to these changes, or have any alternative suggestions for the green belt boundary please send your comments to:

The County Planning Officer,  
North Yorkshire County Council,  
County Hall,  
Northallerton,  
North Yorkshire  
DL7 8AQ

All comments will be considered by the County Planning Committee before any proposals are adopted by the County Council. These could then be included in local plans prepared by District Councils.

# GREATER YORK STUDY

A STRATEGY TO 2006



A REPORT PREPARED BY:-  
North Yorkshire County Council  
York City Council  
Harrogate Borough Council  
Hambleton District Council  
Ryedale District Council  
Selby District Council

February 1990

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## INTRODUCTION

1. In this document, the Greater York Authorities report their conclusions on a long term development strategy for Greater York. The conclusions reflect the views of the six authorities - the County Council and the five District Councils - whose area, either in whole or in part, comprises Greater York [Figure 1].
2. The local authorities involved have long recognised the need to co-ordinate development in Greater York. The need for an overall approach was accepted by the Secretary of State for the Environment in 1987 when he added to the North Yorkshire County Structure Plan for the period 1981-1996 a specific Greater York dimension, providing for the first time a statutory level of provision for housing and employment.
3. Since 1987, the local authorities have been considering the manner in which that level of provision should be distributed throughout Greater York.
4. The issues are complex, not least because of the existence of an approved Green Belt around the City of York, the protection of which is recognised and supported by the local authorities. The Green Belt was established some 30 years ago and is now under increasing pressure for development. The boundaries urgently require review and confirmation. That objective can only be achieved by early decisions on the location of future development in Greater York.
5. This report is, therefore, in three parts:-
  - PART A - summarises the policy framework, particularly that provided by the Structure Plan, identifying the various factors that have led to the conclusions in Part C.
  - PART B - addresses the development proposed to 1996,
  - PART C - identifies the conclusions in respect of the longer term strategy from 1996 to 2006.
6. This document is part of a wider consultation exercise on the long term strategy for Greater York. Views are invited before the authorities reach a final decision later in 1990. Any comments should be received by the County Planning Officer at County Hall, Northallerton, by no later than 12th April, 1990.

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- Pigeoncote, Huntington
- British Rail Land, York
- Employment allocation associated with a new community

ALTERATION TO THE STRUCTURE PLAN

74. If, following the consultation exercise, the new community approach is confirmed then an Alteration to the North Yorkshire County Structure Plan will be necessary to accommodate the principle. The County Council will put this work in hand as a matter of priority.

GREEN BELT SUBJECT PLAN

75. Final confirmation of Green Belt boundaries requires a Green Belt Subject Plan. The Greater York Authorities support the early implementation of such a Plan and the County Council is undertaking its preparation. It is intended that a Draft Plan should be available for public discussion in the autumn of this year.

PART A : THE POLICY FRAMEWORK

### THE COUNTY STRUCTURE PLAN

7. The North Yorkshire County Structure Plan was first approved in 1980. The Secretary of State accepted the County Council's view that there should be some restraint on the scale and pace of development in the County compared with that which had taken place in the 1970's.

8. To that end, he established, for each County District, levels of development to 1991 for housing and employment purposes. The Secretary of State declined at that time however to provide a specific policy framework for Greater York; instead, he invited the appropriate authorities to further consider the development needs of the area. This was completed in 1982 with the publication of the document "Policies for Housing and Industrial Land in the Greater York Area" (September, 1982). Development of Clifton Moor was the main proposal within that document.

9. In approving the Structure Plan, the Secretary of State also confirmed a Green Belt whose outer edge was about 6 miles from York City Centre.

10. By 1985 the County Council, mindful of the need to address development requirements in the County beyond 1991, submitted Alteration No.1 to the Structure Plan which extended the Plan period to 1996. The strategy of reducing past rates of development was again confirmed by the Secretary of State when he approved Alteration No. 1 in 1987. More importantly, the Secretary of State recognised the particular needs of Greater York and added to the appropriate Structure Plan policies a Greater York dimension. Guidelines for both housing and employment purposes were established.

11. Between 1981 and 1996 there is a requirement to provide about 9,100 dwellings and some 215 acres of land for industry.

### LOCAL PLANS

12. The decision of the Secretary of State to include a Greater York dimension in the Structure Plan aided the move towards the preparation of local plans for Greater York, which will translate the provisions of the Structure Plan into specific proposals.

13. The preparation of local plans requires, however, further co-ordination as several issues cross District Council boundaries; for example, the most appropriate locations for new housing and employment. In any event, final decisions on these matters require confirmation of the long term boundaries of the York Green Belt. Therefore, only limited progress has so far been made on statutory local plans in the Greater York area.

### THE YORK GREEN BELT

14. Prior to the local government boundary changes of 1974, the Greater York Area as presently defined was divided between four authorities - the former East, West and North Riding County Councils and the City of York. In response to a government

request during the late 1950's, each County authority defined a Green Belt for its part of the Greater York Area which, together, formed the York Green Belt. No overall co-ordinated approach to defining Green Belt boundaries was, however, adopted.

15. The Greater York Authorities are committed to the principle of the York Green Belt. National policy in respect of Green Belts has been clearly set down in various Circulars and Guidance Notes since 1955. Most recently, PPG2 states that, while recognising the need to provide sufficient housing and employment, Green Belts have five purposes:-

- (a) To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- (b) To safeguard the surrounding countryside from further encroachment;
- (c) To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another;
- (d) To preserve the special character of historic towns; and
- (e) To assist in urban regeneration.

16. These objectives are accepted by the Greater York Authorities.

17. The Green Belt also has a positive role in providing opportunities for local people to have access to open countryside around the urban area. Recently, the Greater York Authorities have acted to encourage public access to the countryside through the establishment of the Greater York Countryside Management Project.

18. The recently published Department of the Environment booklet, "Green Belts", specifically identifies the main purpose of the York Green Belt as being to safeguard the special character of the historic City, which might be endangered by unrestricted expansion. The bulk of the land in the Green Belt is referred to as good and pleasant farmland providing links with open land running into the built-up area of the City.

19. These 'green wedges' which run into the centre of the City are of particular importance - for example, along the A19 at Clifton, at New Earswick/Huntington, Heworth Without, Fulford/Heslington and Nunthorpe (Figure 2). The Green Belt has also helped to protect the identity of individual settlements such as Upper and Nether Poppleton, Skelton, Bishopthorpe and Copmanthorpe. Although they have all experienced substantial development, the Green Belt has ensured that they remain identifiable and separate communities.

#### ACHIEVING A GREEN BELT SUBJECT PLAN

20. A review of the York Green Belt should establish boundaries capable of lasting unchanged for many years. Such an exercise does, however, require agreement on the location of development in the longer term which will provide the framework for the Subject Plan. It has been necessary, therefore, to reach conclusions on the amount and distribution of land required for development first up to 1996 [the period covered by the approved Structure Plan] and second, the period beyond 1996.



Fig2

□ GREEN BELT

The York Green Belt

### ESTABLISHING LONG TERM GREEN BELT BOUNDARIES

21. Green Belts enjoy massive public support and inspire public confidence. The boundaries of Green Belts require a substantial degree of permanence. Once defined, Green Belt boundaries should not be the subject of short term amendment. It is clear that the York Green Belt which has served Greater York so well over the last 30 years now needs to be re-examined in order to define boundaries which can endure well into the next century.

22. Under normal circumstances, local plans would be the means of achieving this end. In Greater York, however, a large number of individual local plans for parts of five District Council areas would need to be brought forward simultaneously. There would not, however, be an overall assessment of the York Green Belt. In these circumstances, the Greater York Authorities believe that the only means of securing an early review of the Green Belt is through a Green Belt Subject Plan prepared by the County Council in conjunction with District Councils. This will, in one exercise, review the entire Green Belt.

### ASSESSING LAND REQUIREMENTS

23. The approved County Structure Plan provides the framework for identifying land needs up to 1996. Beyond 1996, the end date of the Structure Plan, there is as yet no approved strategic framework.

24. In looking beyond 1996, the Greater York Authorities are aware that the Secretary of State as recently as 1987 confirmed that the Structure Plan strategy of restraint is the appropriate way for the County, including Greater York, to develop until such time as the Structure Plan is reviewed. Until a review is undertaken there is no agreed basis for departing from current approved policies.

25. As far as Greater York is concerned, therefore, it is considered that the general philosophy of development restraint embodied in the approved Structure Plan to 1996 should be the basis of the longer term strategy. It is not considered appropriate to further restrict development or to increase the rate of development above that already catered for.

26. In general terms, the approved numeric policies for Greater York are proposed to be rolled forward into the post-1996 period. Furthermore, 2006 is considered to be the appropriate end-date for the longer term strategy, there being no sound statistical basis for assessing the post-2006 requirement. Consideration has also been given to whether the long term objective of a redefined Green Belt can be accommodated within a 2006 timescale.

27. In outlining the basis of the strategy to 2006, consideration has been given to the particular trends in Greater York in recent years concerning the use of land for industry. Continuation of the implied annual rates of industrial development in the approved Structure Plan to 2006 would require a further 140 acres of land for industrial development. A number of factors should, however, be borne in mind:-

- (a) There is a need to provide land not only for industry but also for other employment uses - e.g offices, research and development. Legal changes in 1987 (to the Use Classes Order) mean that buildings can change between these uses much more easily than before.
- (b) Land previously allocated for industry in Greater York has been used for other purposes e.g. retailing.
- (c) Much of the "industrial" land actually taken up in recent years has been by firms relocating from the City Centre but creating few new jobs in the process since vacated sites have largely been redeveloped for other uses, such as housing.
- (d) The employment base in Greater York is changing, with growth in the service sector and decline in the manufacturing sector. This requires a greater degree of flexibility than was hitherto the case.

28. It is considered appropriate, therefore, to proceed to 2006 on the basis of land required for employment rather than for industry. Bearing this in mind, together with the factors above, it is suggested that, up to 2006, provision should be made for about 350 acres of land for employment purposes. Of this, 150 acres is recommended to be available to 1996.

29. This document lists specific sites considered suitable for employment purposes pre-1996 (paras 40 and 41) and post 1996 (para 73). In addition, it is also intended to investigate two other sites in the context of a Green Belt Subject Plan to determine whether or not there is a case for employment related development in these locations. Both sites are in the York Green Belt:-

London Bridge is partly in Selby District and partly in York City. Boroughbridge Road is located in Harrogate District.

30. In terms of housing and employment, therefore, the strategy makes the following provision:-

(a) UP TO 1996

(i) Housing

31. The approved Structure Plan requires the provision of land for about 9,100 new dwellings over the period 1981-96. When completions, planning permissions and the anticipated contribution of small sites have been taken into account, there is a residual requirement for about 400 dwellings. This represents an area of about 40 acres.

32. It is now evident however that more dwellings have in fact been provided on 'windfall' sites within the urban area than had previously been anticipated. As a result, the residual requirement identified in Para. 31 above can in theory be reduced. There is, however, little scope in practice for postponing development on those sites proposed for housing up to 1996 listed in paragraph 38 below. As a result, the total scale of residential development in the Greater York area to

1996 may well exceed the housing growth guidelines in the approved Structure Plan. This situation reflects the larger than anticipated scale of development and redevelopment which has occurred within the urban area. Consequentially, any further development on additional peripheral sites will not be appropriate in the period to 1996.

(ii) Employment Land

33. The overall provision to 2006 of 350 acres of land for employment purposes needs to be phased to ensure a steady supply of land. On this basis, therefore, it is proposed to make provision for 150 acres up to 1996.

(b) THE PERIOD FROM 1996-2006

(i) Housing Land

34. Adopting the same annual rate of growth for the period 1996-2006 as is embodied in the approved Structure Plan [9,100 dwellings from 1981-1996] establishes a requirement for about 6,100 dwellings. From this, however, must be deducted the contribution likely to be made by small sites (of less than 2½ acres) within the Greater York area. This is estimated at around 1,600 dwellings. New land will need to be identified, therefore, for around 4,500 dwellings. This assessment does, however, need careful monitoring. In addition, the effect of new information, for example on household formation rates, will have to be taken into account.

(ii) Employment Land

35. Post-1996, the strategy provides for a further 200 acres of land for employment purposes. This provision will also need careful review and monitoring.

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With the land requirements established, PARTS B & C indicate the recommended land use strategy for the periods up to 1996 and, beyond, to 2006.

PART B : PROVISION TO 1996

WORK ON LOCAL PLANS

36. In reaching a conclusion on the amount and location of land required up to 1996, the Greater York Authorities have had available a considerable body of work undertaken in parts of Greater York, particularly South Ryedale and North Selby, in the early stages of local plan preparation. This has proved invaluable in providing detailed information on a number of sites.

LAND FOR HOUSING TO 1996

37. Particularly helpful has been the realisation that the provision of the extra 40 acres of land for housing up to 1996 can be achieved without adversely affecting the Green Belt. Up to 1996 therefore the strategy largely continues past practice of identifying a limited number of peripheral sites which do not conflict with Green Belt policies.

38. The following sites are proposed for residential development to 1996 (Figure 3):-

Foxwood, York	10 acres
British Rail land at Clifton Depot, York	10 acres
Westpit Lane, Strensall, Ryedale	14 acres
South of Beckside, Elvington, Selby	3.8 acres
North Lane, Wheldrake, Selby	2.6 acres
Back Lane South, Wheldrake, Selby	2.5 acres

39. A further area of 19 acres has been granted planning permission, on appeal, at Manor Lane, Rawcliffe.

LAND FOR EMPLOYMENT TO 1996

40. The following sites [which accord with local authority intentions] should partly or wholly contribute towards the land required for employment purposes to 1996. (Figure 3)

- York University Science Park, Selby	21 acres
- Foss Islands, York	15 acres
- Clifton Moor/Water Lane, Ryedale	25 acres
- Millfield Lane, Poppleton, Harrogate	55 acres
- Clifton Hospital (offices), Ryedale	up to 40 acres
- Naburn Hospital (existing site), Selby	up to 26 acres
- Murton Way, Osbaldwick, Ryedale	10 acres
- Wheldrake Industrial Estate, Selby	5 acres
- Elvington Industrial Estate, Selby	12 acres
- Derwent Valley Industrial Estate, Dunnington, Selby	9 acres

41. In concluding that the foregoing sites should contribute to employment land requirements up to 1996, it should, however, be borne in mind that:-

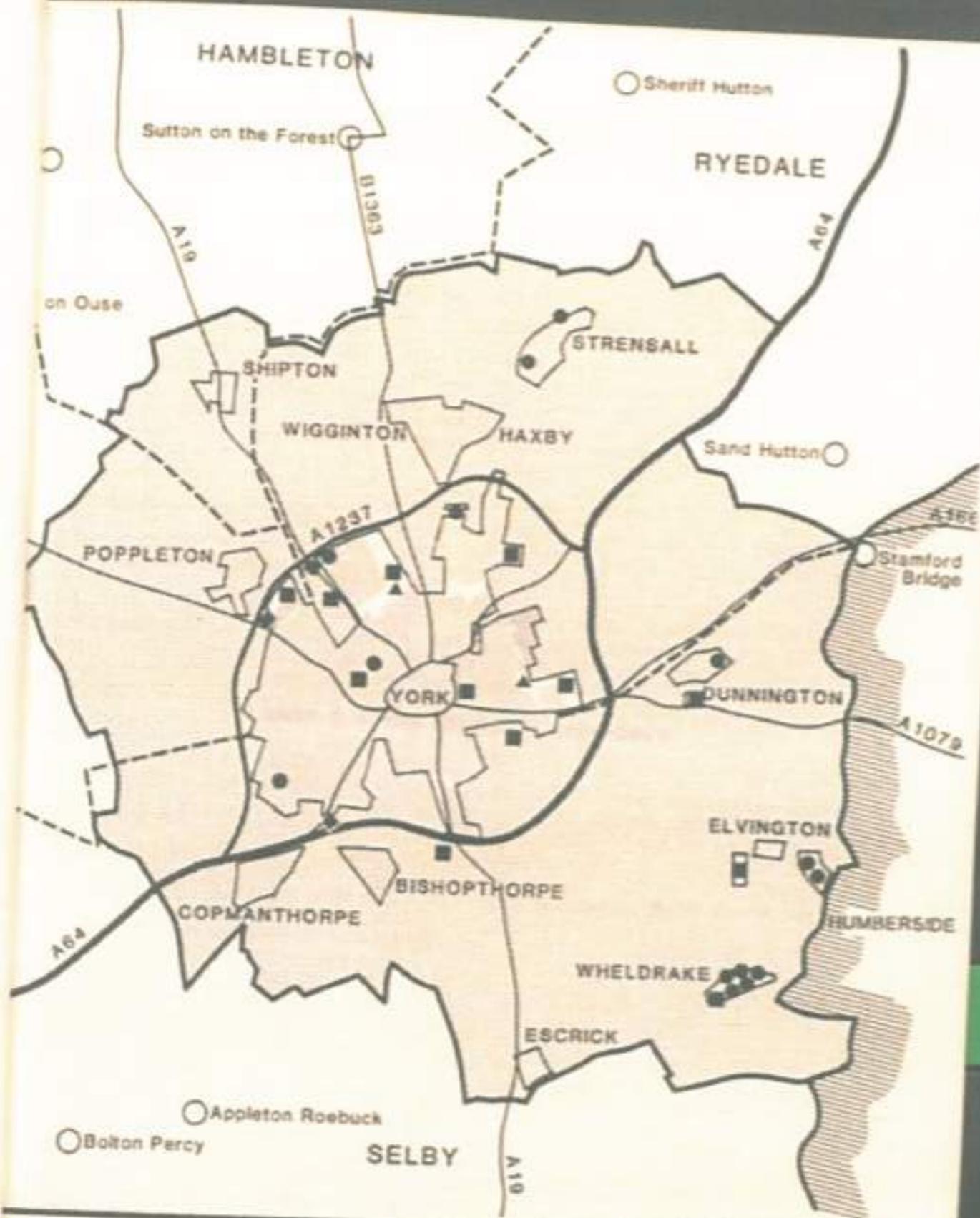
- (i) Not all the land associated with the sites listed will necessarily be developed before 1996.

- (ii) Clifton Hospital is not due to close completely until 1994 and its contribution prior to 1994 is therefore likely to be limited.
- (iii) The Naburn Hospital site may now have potential for business use, possibly in association with retailing.



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**KEY**

- Employment Sites
- Housing Sites
- ◆ Other employment sites to be investigated
- ▲ Other housing sites to be investigated
- Green Belt

Not shown on map - a new settlement beyond the outer boundary of the Green Belt

**Fig 3**

**DEVELOPMENT TO 2006**

PART C : THE STRATEGY 1996-2006

42. The land requirements of the strategy between 1996 and 2006 are for 4,500 dwellings and 200 acres for employment. In developing the strategy, detailed consideration has been given to a number of factors.

THE CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS HOUSING REQUIREMENTS BY THE CITY OF YORK

43. A major issue has been the amount and location of the 'new land' needed to accommodate a long term strategy. The 'new land' requirement would be reduced if a contribution continued to come from within the existing built up area, either through identified large sites or large 'windfall' sites. The likely future contribution that such sites could make within the City of York has been assessed, particularly as the proposed revisions to PPG3 give added weight to the role of suitable urban sites in meeting land requirements, while at the same time avoiding "town-crawling".

44. Within the City, an average of 120 dwellings per year were provided between 1981 and 1987 on sites with a capacity of more than 25 dwellings.

45. It is concluded therefore, that between 1996 and 2006, a contribution of about 1,150 dwellings can realistically be expected from such larger sites in the City of York. Their actual contribution will be regularly monitored.

ADDITIONAL LAND REQUIRED FOR HOUSING TO 2006

46. The housing land requirement between 1996 and 2006 is 4,500 dwellings on large sites. It is considered that 2,500 of these could be accommodated on the following sites (Figure 3):-

Sites within the City of York	About 1150 dwellings
Manor Lane, Rawcliffe, Ryedale	33 acres
North Strensall, Ryedale	26 acres
Haxby Road, New Earswick, Ryedale	35 acres
Petercroft Lane, Dunnington, Selby	14 acres
York Road, Elvington, Selby	11 acres
North Lane/Broad Highway, Wheldrake, Selby	6 acres
North Lane, Wheldrake, Selby	8 acres
Main Street/Back Lane South, Wheldrake, Selby	7 acres
Capacity of the above sites in Ryedale and Selby Districts	About <u>1150</u> dwellings
Total of all the above sites	About <u>2500</u> dwellings

47. A number of the above-mentioned sites presently carry Green Belt designation and their contribution will need to be considered in the context of the Green Belt Subject Plan.

48. Even with the contribution made by the above sites, there is still a need to find land for a further 2,000 or so dwellings.

#### DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS 1996 TO 2006

49. Up to 2006 some 2,000 dwellings need to be accommodated over and above the 2,500 that can be provided on identified sites. To this end, the merits of eight distributional options to accommodate the 2,000 dwellings were assessed. These were:-

- The further dispersal of development to the periphery of the urban area.
- The expansion of existing settlements outside the Green Belt. eg, Tadcaster, Easingwold.
- The small scale, dispersed, expansion of existing villages within the Green Belt.
- The establishment of a single (larger) new settlement within the Green Belt.
- The establishment of two new (smaller) settlements within the Green Belt.
- The major expansion of a selected existing village or villages within the Green Belt.
- The establishment of a new settlement or settlements outside the Green Belt.
- The development of urban fringe sites at Clifton Moor/Water Lane and Osbaldwick, plus
  - either - small scale village expansion;
  - or - major expansion of an existing settlement;
  - or - a new settlement or settlements either within or outside the Green Belt.

#### THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE DRAFT TEXT OF A REPLACEMENT FOR PPG3

50. On 4th October 1989, the DoE released for discussion a draft replacement of PPG3 on the planning aspects of housing development. Additionally, the present Secretary of State has made a number of statements relating to the need to protect Green Belts.

51. In particular, the Guidance clearly states that "any proposed sites (for new settlements) would need to be beyond the outer boundaries of approved Green Belts" (para. 23). To all intents and purposes, the York Green Belt is an approved Green Belt. This view is confirmed by ministerial statements on the area of approved Green Belts given to the House of Commons in April, 1987 and in July, 1988 by senior Government Ministers. Formal definition of the detailed boundaries does, however, require a Green Belt Subject Plan following the initial assessment of where the boundary should be.

52. Clearly, the "punching of holes" in the Green Belt in order to provide land for new settlements is not, now, a realistic option.

53. Similar considerations apply to the release of significant areas of Green Belt land on or adjacent to the periphery of the City for other development purposes, as well as major expansion of existing settlements within the Green Belt.

#### ASSESSMENT OF THE OPTIONS

54. The merits of the eight options listed in para. 49 have been reviewed and a summary of conclusions is given in the attached Table 1. The options involving expansion of existing settlements beyond the Green Belt, the expansion of existing settlements within the Green Belt and the development of new settlements within the Green Belt are rejected either because they fail to provide a satisfactory solution to the development needs of the York area or because they conflict fundamentally with current Government policy.

55. Similarly, a continuation of past practice of peripheral urban development could not be achieved without removing substantial areas of land from the Green Belt - even though two sites at Water Lane and Osbaldwick [neither of which is in the Green Belt] could accommodate a maximum of 1,000 dwellings. Equally, the Greater York Authorities see little merit in accommodating 2,000 dwellings by expanding existing villages in the Greater York Area.

56. One option has, therefore, been considered further - that of accommodating the longer term development requirements in the form of a new community or communities beyond the outer boundary of the Green Belt.

#### A NEW SETTLEMENT OR SETTLEMENTS OUTSIDE THE GREEN BELT

57. Consideration has been given to the merits of new settlements, particularly the means by which facilities and services could be provided and the manner in which the development would be controlled. This would be necessary to ensure the successful implementation of a new settlement or settlements in the Greater York Area.

58. If new settlements are not acceptable within the Green Belt, their relevance outside the Green Belt needs to be assessed. While such an option would be a major departure from current practice, it would:-

- (a) Protect the York Green Belt largely as it is presently constituted;
- (b) Comply with the specific and general requirements of the revised Draft PPG on Housing;
- (c) Allow early review of the inner boundary of the Green Belt and final statutory confirmation of the York Green Belt;

- (d) Allow scope for accommodating the post 2006 requirement outside the Green Belt; and
- (e) Avoid the need for "White Land" to be identified and excluded from the present area of the Green Belt.

59. The requirement to accommodate around 2,000 dwellings could be met by one larger, or two smaller settlements. The provision of community services and facilities would be the responsibility of the developer. In locational terms, this option should:-

- (a) avoid the Green Belt;
- (b) minimise migration pressures from the West Yorkshire area;
- (c) be as close to the City as is practicable given the constraint of avoiding the Green Belt;
- (d) have good access to the primary road network but would not lead to unacceptable traffic consequences on any single part of the network;
- (e) avoid the best quality agricultural land;
- (f) avoid areas of high landscape quality and areas of archaeological and nature conservation importance;
- (g) be feasible in terms of the provision of infrastructure, particularly surface water and foul drainage; and
- (h) provide a balanced community with adequate land for employment.

60. Each of the above requirements may have particular locational implications. Approved strategic planning policy, for example, seeks to minimise development pressures originating outside the County. Locations which are most readily accessible to the West Yorkshire conurbation would be likely to stimulate competition within the local housing market to the potential detriment of local residents and to lead to pressure for additional land releases.

61. It would however be inappropriate at this stage to reach any conclusions as to the suitability or acceptability of any location lying outside the Green Belt, including locations which might be across the County boundary in Humberside. It will also be necessary to consider the implications for the York area of a possible major new settlement to the east of Wetherby.

62. More detailed work needs to be carried out before any firm conclusions on location can be reached but this need not preclude acceptance of the principle of a new settlement.

TABLE 1. SUMMARY ASSESSMENT OF STRATEGIC OPTIONS

OPTION	REJECT
1. Dispersed Peripheral Expansion	<p><b>REJECT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- cannot identify sufficient land to meet assessed development requirements without encroaching significantly into the Green Belt.</li> <li>- does not address the issues of how to meet development requirements in Greater York post-2006.</li> <li>- could lead to unacceptable "town-crawling".</li> </ul>
2. Expansion of Existing Settlements outside the Green Belt (e.g. Easingwold, Tadcaster)	<p><b>REJECT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- there are no settlements of an appropriate size located close enough to York which are capable of meeting the urban area's development land needs without creating significant environmental and structural problems.</li> <li>- the further away from York that land is allocated, the less likely it is to satisfy the development needs of the York area and to relieve pressure for the release of sites within the Green Belt.</li> <li>- major expansion of existing settlements to the west and south west of York (i.e. Tadcaster) would be likely to stimulate increased inward migration from the Leeds area contrary to Government and approved County strategic planning policy.</li> </ul>
3. Small Scale (Dispersed) Expansion of Existing Villages within the Green Belt	<p><b>REJECT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- development on the scale required could not be accommodated without significant damage to the environment and character of the villages, many of which have experienced little development in recent years.</li> <li>- minimal service base and infrastructure in most of the villages makes them inherently unsuitable for accommodating major new developments.</li> <li>- further 'White Land' would need to be identified in order to accommodate longer term, post-2006, requirements.</li> </ul>

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TABLE 1. SUMMARY ASSESSMENT OF STRATEGIC OPTIONS (continued)

OPTION	
4. Establishing a Single (Larger) New Settlement within the Green Belt	<p><b>REJECT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- fundamentally in conflict with the provisions of PPG 2 Green Belts, PPG 3 Housing (particularly the current draft revision) and recent policy statements by The Secretary of State for the Environment and not therefore a realistic option.</li> </ul>
5. Establishing Two New (Smaller) Settlements within the Green Belt	<p><b>REJECT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- reason as per Option 4.</li> </ul>
6. Major Expansion of a Selected Existing Settlement within the Green Belt	<p><b>REJECT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- reason as per Option 4.</li> </ul>
7. New Settlement or Settlements located outside the Green Belt	<p><b>CARRY FORWARD</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- no conflict with Green Belt.</li> <li>- facilitates early definition of Green Belt boundaries.</li> <li>- no inherent conflict with PPG 3.</li> <li>- potential for future longer term expansion without impacting on the Green Belt.</li> </ul>
8. Development of Urban Fringe Sites at Water Lane and Debaldwick, together with either small scale village expansion, or major expansion of an existing settlement, or a major new settlement or settlements within or outside the Green Belt	<p><b>REJECT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- although the urban fringe sites at Water Lane, Clifton, and at Debaldwick are proposed to be investigated further in order to determine their potential for contributing to development land requirements, this option, taken as a whole, fails to provide an appropriate response for the reasons given variously in connection with Options 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 above.</li> </ul>

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#### IMPLICATIONS OF A NEW SETTLEMENT OUTSIDE THE GREEN BELT

63. This option represents a major departure from past and current planning practice in Greater York and, if pursued, should be on the basis of a clear understanding of the implications. Of particular importance are the following:-
- (a) The York Green Belt would, in broad terms, remain as presently constituted.
  - (b) Final definition of the York Green Belt could be envisaged at a very early stage.
  - (c) A new settlement, or settlements, outside the Green Belt would need to be included in a Structure Plan review for the post 1996 period.
  - (d) Large scale peripheral or freestanding development on the immediate fringe of the Greater York urban area would be precluded for at least 20 years. Development pressures in such areas would, however, be likely to continue.
  - (e) Within Greater York, future development would be restricted to infill sites within the built up areas, areas of "white land" identified in local plans, "windfall" sites and those sites referred to in paragraph 46.

#### CHOOSING A LOCATION FOR A NEW SETTLEMENT OR SETTLEMENTS

64. The Local Authorities have considered whether they should identify a specific location or locations for the new settlement or settlements or whether this should be left to the private sector once a general area of search has been agreed. They conclude that once the policy framework has been agreed and a general area of search defined, the private sector should play its part in identifying specific sites within the area of search. The Local Authorities will, nonetheless, need to provide very clear and unequivocal guidance to the private sector as to their requirements.

65. The Local Authorities would wish to work closely with the private sector in order to identify the location or locations for a new community or communities once the area of search had been defined.

#### SITES AT WATER LANE AND OSBALDWICK

66. A consistent theme in this report has been the difficulty in allocating land for future development without affecting the Green Belt. Any land within or adjacent to the urban area and which does not carry Green Belt designation is, therefore, worthy of investigation particularly if its development reduces 'land take' elsewhere.

67. Sites at Water Lane (100 acres) and Osbaldwick (58 acres) fall into this category, currently being identified as "White Land" (Figure 3). In both cases, it is unlikely that all the land would be developed due to particular site characteristics. Conversely it has been suggested that the Water Lane site should form an extension to the Green Belt; a similar approach could be adopted for part of the Osbaldwick site.

68. It is intended to review the Green Belt potential of the two sites, together with their development potential, during preparation of the Green Belt Subject Plan.

#### A CHOICE OF HOUSING LOCATIONS IN GREATER YORK

69. It is important that there should be a choice of housing both in terms of location and type. A new community strategy would provide the following new housing locations:-

- (a) A new settlement or settlements located outside the Green Belt.
- (b) Those peripheral sites referred to in paragraph 46.
- (c) Allocations in Local Plans.
- (d) Infill sites.
- (e) Windfall sites.

70. In addition, of course, the existing housing stock will form the major part of the housing market.

71. As far as (e) is concerned, it is likely that a number of sites will become available within the framework of the built-up area but which cannot be identified at this stage. It is recommended that any such windfall sites are treated as providing an additional element of flexibility and that there is a general policy presumption in favour of releasing such sites unless specific site factors justify their refusal.

72. It is considered, therefore, that bearing in mind the severe constraints in Greater York, an acceptable range of housing locations would be provided by a new community strategy.

#### EMPLOYMENT SITES IN THE PERIOD 1996-2006

73. The Greater York Authorities consider that an allocation of around 200 acres would be appropriate for the period. There are a number of difficulties with accommodating this level of provision, not least that the existing urban area is "hard-up" against the Green Belt. Nonetheless, provision for employment must be considered. To this end it is proposed that the following sites outside the Green Belt should contribute to employment requirements between 1996 and 2006 (Figure 3):-

- Pigeoncote, Huntington
- British Rail Land, York
- Employment allocation associated with a new community

ALTERATION TO THE STRUCTURE PLAN

74. If, following the consultation exercise, the new community approach is confirmed then an Alteration to the North Yorkshire County Structure Plan will be necessary to accommodate the principle. The County Council will put this work in hand as a matter of priority.

GREEN BELT SUBJECT PLAN

75. Final confirmation of Green Belt boundaries requires a Green Belt Subject Plan. The Greater York Authorities support the early implementation of such a Plan and the County Council is undertaking its preparation. It is intended that a Draft Plan should be available for public discussion in the autumn of this year.

### CONCLUSIONS

A thorough reassessment has been undertaken of the way ahead in Greater York.

New considerations have entered the equation.

Quite clearly, it is important that the future strategy for Greater York should not only ensure a durable Green Belt but also make provision for an appropriate level of housing and employment.

It is hoped, however, that the assessment outlined in this report will generally be shared. The report focuses attention on what appear to be clearly defined issues.

A new settlement or settlements outside the Green Belt would be a major departure from present policy and should only be pursued with a clear understanding of the benefits and consequences. This report has addressed the implications of such a strategy. Setting these aside, a new community option is the only one likely to ensure rapid and final definition of the York Green Belt.

After detailed deliberation, the Greater York Authorities recommend that the balance of advantage in terms of resolving the development needs of the Greater York Area up to 2006 and promoting the earliest possible resolution of Green Belt boundaries lies in meeting the assessed residual urban land requirement between 1996 and 2006 through the development of a new settlement or settlements located beyond the outer boundary of the Green Belt.

# ANNEXE III iii

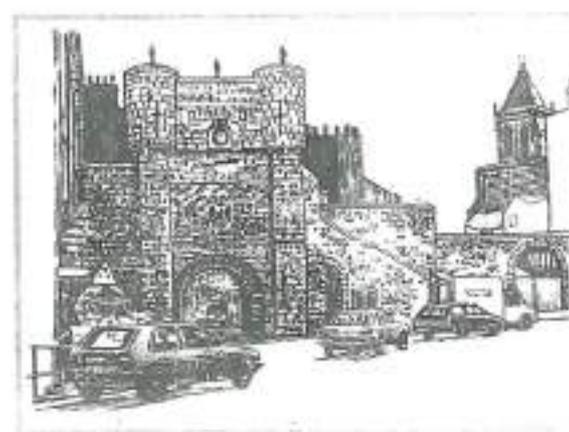
YORK GREEN BELT LOCAL PLAN

DEPOSIT DRAFT 1990

# York Green Belt Local Plan



North Yorkshire  
County Council



# YORK GREEN BELT LOCAL PLAN

**NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL  
SEPTEMBER 1991**

**John D. Rennilson, MA MSc MRTPI ARICS MBIM  
County Planning Officer**

## PREFACE

In February 1991 the County Council published the Draft York Green Belt Local Plan. This was the subject of an extensive 10 week consultation exercise in the Spring during which District and Parish Councils, Members of the public, interest groups and other organisations were invited to submit comments.

Publication of the Draft Plan generated a high level of public interest. In total over 2000 representations were made. All the comments received have been carefully considered by the County Council and, as a result, a number of changes have been made. These changes, as approved by the County Council on 31 July 1991, have been incorporated into this document.

The Green Belt Local Plan has now been placed 'on deposit' for a period of 6 weeks.

There is now an opportunity for anyone to object formally, to express support for or to make any other comments on the Plan. All objections lodged in this 6 week period will be considered by the County Council and, if appropriate, there may be further amendments to the Plan. Where objections cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of the objector, a Public Local Inquiry will be held. At this stage objectors will have the opportunity to present their case to an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for the Environment.

This is an important stage in the progress of the Local Plan towards formal adoption and I strongly urge that everyone makes use of the statutory opportunity it provides either to object to or to support the proposals.

MRS C E N EDWARDS  
CHAIRMAN  
COUNTY PLANNING COMMITTEE

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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This document is the York Green Belt Local Plan. It deals with the definition of the detailed boundaries of the Green Belt in the York area and sets out policies for the control of development relating to that area. The Plan has been prepared in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Structure and Local Plans) Regulations 1982-1987 and current Government advice.

### What is a Green Belt?

- 1.2 "A Green Belt is an area of land, near to and sometimes surrounding a town, which is kept open by permanent and severe restrictions on building" (Department of the Environment, "The Green Belts", HMSO 1988). In this context, 'open land' means land generally free of buildings. Normally, the only new buildings allowed are those associated with agriculture or other uses which need a large open area or by their very nature need a countryside location.
- 1.3 The designation of a Green Belt is a very important part of planning policies, not only for the Green Belt area itself but also for the built-up areas encircled by it.

### The Need for the Plan

- 1.4 The Secretary of State for the Environment is urging local planning authorities to ensure that well prepared and up to date local plans are available as the basis for development control, particularly in areas that are under persistent pressure for new development. This applies especially to those Green Belts where detailed boundaries have not yet been finalised.
- 1.5 The York Green Belt was established some 30 years ago. It is now under increasing pressure for development and it is essential that further delay in formally adopting its detailed boundaries is avoided ensuring that, at the earliest opportunity, the York Green Belt forms part of the statutory Development Plan.
- 1.6 Under normal circumstances, Green Belt boundaries would be defined in area-based Local Plans prepared by District Councils. In Greater York, however, several individual Local Plans for parts of five District Council areas would need to be brought forward simultaneously. There would not, in these circumstances, be an overall assessment of the York Green Belt. The only realistic means, therefore, of securing an early definition of the York Green Belt is through a Green Belt Local Plan prepared and adopted by the County Council. In one exercise, the entire Green Belt will be defined in a comprehensive and co-ordinated way. The Greater York Authorities (North Yorkshire County Council, Hambleton, Harrogate, Ryedale, Selby and York District Councils) all agree that a Green Belt Local Plan is the only way to finally resolve the Green Belt debate.

### A Long Term Green Belt

- 1.7 All Green Belts require "permanency". To achieve this end in the York Area, it is essential that the proposals in the Green Belt Local Plan take full account of the long-term development strategy for the Greater York area which has been prepared and adopted by the six Greater York Authorities. Details of this strategy, which has been the subject of public consultation, are set out in the 'Greater York Study : A Strategy to 2006' adopted in the Autumn of 1990 by the Greater York Authorities, the relevant aspects of which will be embodied in Alteration No 3 to the County Structure Plan.

### Public Involvement in the Green Belt Local Plan

- 1.8 The Draft Green Belt Local Plan was subject to an extensive programme of publicity and consultation with the public, other local authorities, parish councils, Government Departments, statutory undertakings and other interested bodies between 5 February and 19 April 1991. The Plan has been amended as a result of the comments received and approved for the purposes of placing it formally on deposit as a further stage in the statutory procedures leading to its adoption by the County Council as a statutory Local Plan.

## CHAPTER TWO

### SCOPE AND FUNCTIONS OF THE LOCAL PLAN

#### Nature of the Plan

- 2.1 The system of planning embodied in the Town and Country Planning Act, 1990 provides for two tiers of plans to be prepared - Structure Plans and Local Plans. Structure Plans are prepared by County Councils and establish broad, strategic planning policies for the County as a whole. Local Plans deal with local planning issues in greater detail and on a site-specific basis. They are intended to translate the general planning framework provided by the Structure Plan into specific policies which can be related to individual properties or precise areas of land. In preparing a Local Plan, the planning authority must ensure that its proposals conform generally to the provisions of the approved Structure Plan.
- 2.2 Local Plans can be either comprehensive plans covering all aspects of planning within an area or deal with a specific subject. The Green Belt Local Plan is the latter, dealing with the specific issue of the Green Belt.
- 2.3 The North Yorkshire County Structure Plan, together with any Local Plans prepared for the relevant parts of Hambleton, Harrogate, Ryedale, Selby and York Districts and the York Green Belt Local Plan, will form the Development Plan for the area defined as being within the York Green Belt.

#### Functions of the Local Plan

- 2.4 The York Green Belt Local Plan has four main functions:-
  - (i) **to apply the Government's national planning policies and the policies of the North Yorkshire County Structure Plan and to take account of the long term development strategy of the Greater York Study:**

In preparing this Local Plan, the County Council must follow guidelines laid down by the Government and by the County Structure Plan. Broad strategic policies on the control of development and the general extent of the Green Belt are indicated in the Structure Plan. The Green Belt Local Plan must reflect these. Similarly, a failure to reflect Government policy would give rise to problems when development proposals are judged against the Local Plan.
  - (ii) **to define detailed boundaries for the Green Belt around York:**

The Structure Plan indicates the general extent of the Green Belt. The Green Belt Local Plan defines its boundaries in terms of specific features on the ground.
  - (iii) **to set out policies for the control of development within the area designated as Green Belt:**

Each year, the local planning authorities receive many applications for planning permission in the Greater York area. A formally adopted Green Belt Local Plan will provide a sound and coherent basis for their consideration and will be given appropriate weight by the Secretary of State in taking decisions on appeal. It also assists potential developers by indicating with greater certainty how their applications are likely to be determined.

All planning applications will continue to be determined by the relevant Councils on their individual merits. The Green Belt Local Plan will be an important reference point, with applications being considered against all relevant planning policies and proposals in this document. The Green Belt Local Plan is not, however, the only reference point; other approved Local Plans, Central Government advice and normal planning considerations will also be taken into account.
  - (iv) **to bring local and detailed planning issues before the public:**

The Green Belt Local Plan has been the subject of an extensive period of public consultation. The Local Plan has been amended as a result of the comments received, and has now been placed on formal deposit. Any formal objections received during the deposit period of six weeks which cannot be resolved will be the subject of a Public Local Inquiry.

## Form and content of the Local Plan

- 2.5 The Local Plan consists of two elements, a "Written Statement" and a "Proposals Map". In the event of any contradiction, the provisions of the Written Statement will prevail over those of the Proposals Map.

### (i) The Written Statement

- 2.6 This sets out in written form the issues which the Local Plan will address and the policies to be applied in the Plan area. It includes a reasoned justification for the policies and refers to any other policies of relevance to the Local Plan, for example those embodied in the County Structure Plan, and to the views and advice of Government Departments.

### (ii) The Proposals Map

- 2.7 The Proposals Map (which is divided into four map-sheets at 1:20,000 scale) on which the boundary of the Green Belt is drawn, delineates the precise areas to which the policies contained in the Written Statement will apply.

## Relationship with other Local Plans

- 2.8 The York Green Belt Local Plan addresses the definition of the detailed boundaries of the Green Belt and establishes policies to control development within it. As such, it differs significantly from most Local Plans which deal more comprehensively with the future development of an area. Such Local Plans will also be required for the area covered by the Green Belt; they will both complement the provisions of the Green Belt Local Plan and carry forward its proposals.

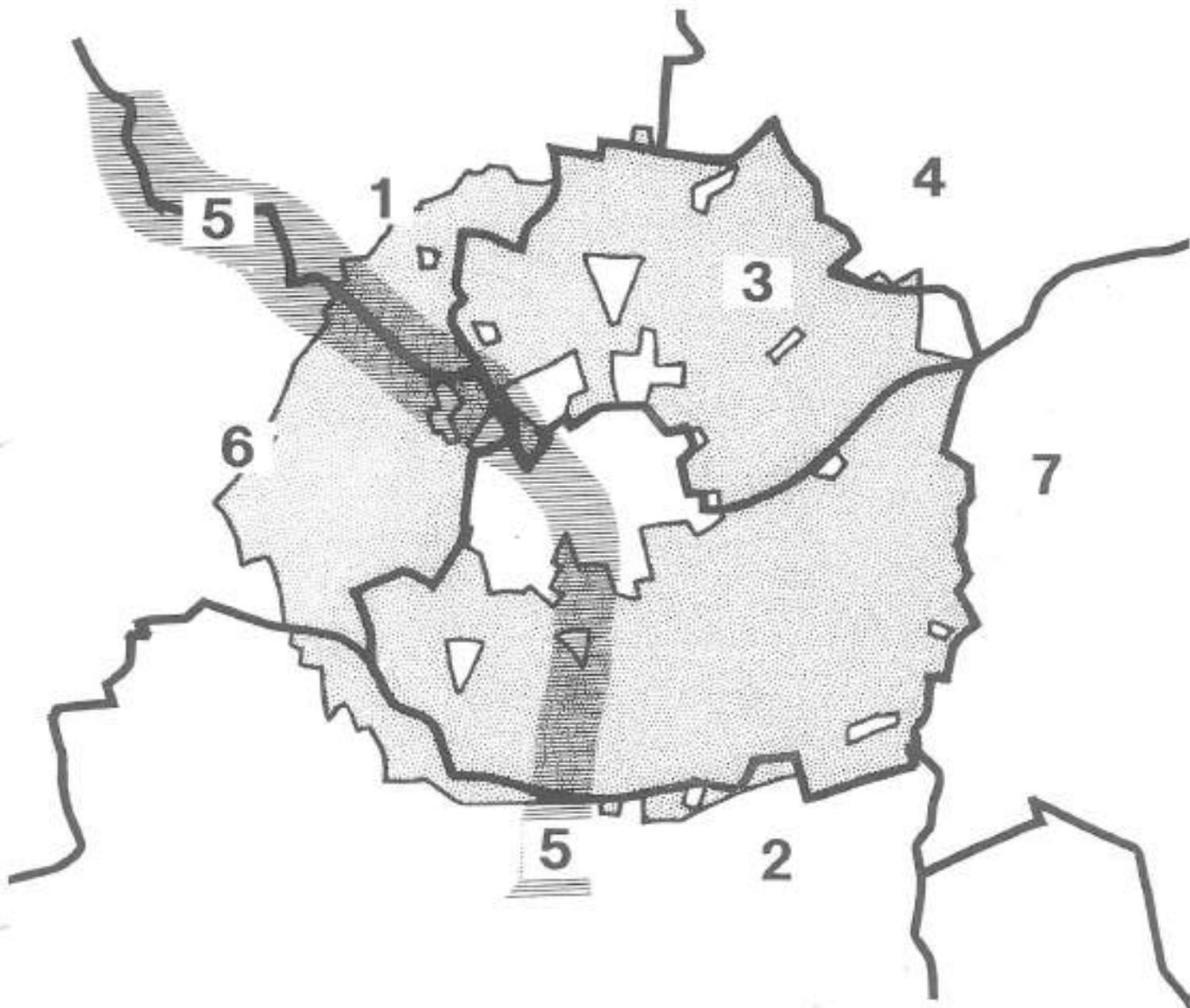
- 2.9 The following Local Plans, either approved, or in Draft, or informal relate to various parts of the York Green Belt Local Plan area (Figure 1):-

1. **The Vale of York Local Plan (1988)** : This plan has recently been the subject of a Public Local Inquiry and its adoption by Hambleton District Council is anticipated in September 1991.
2. **Selby Rural Areas Local Plan (1990)** : This relates to those parts of Selby District outside the Greater York area. Nevertheless, it includes a small part of the York Green Belt. This Plan was adopted by Selby District Council in June 1990. The relevant provisions of this Plan which relate to the definition of the York Green Belt will be superseded by the York Green Belt Local Plan.
3. **Southern Ryedale Local Plan Draft (1991)** : This Draft Plan was the subject of a public consultation exercise in February and March 1991.
4. **Ryedale Rural Areas and Kirkbymoorside Local Plan (1987)** : This relates to parts of Ryedale District outside the Greater York area and was adopted by Ryedale District Council in August 1987. A small part of the York Green Belt as proposed in this document extends into the Local Plan area.
5. **River Ure and Ouse Recreation Subject Plan (adopted 1990)** : A Subject Local Plan prepared by North Yorkshire County Council and covering recreational use of the rivers and adjoining areas on both banks.
6. **The Harrogate Rural Areas Study (1984)** : An informal policy document prepared by Harrogate Borough Council, which covers that area of the York Green Belt lying in Harrogate District.

### **Relationship of the York Green Belt Local Plan to Plans of Adjoining Authorities**

- 2.10 For the most part, the eastern boundary of the York Green Belt follows the River Derwent, which is also the County boundary with Humberside. The Humberside Replacement County Structure Plan was approved in August 1987. The Plan seeks to direct growth to a hierarchy of settlements capable of absorbing varying degrees of development, with emphasis placed on the larger settlements in Humberside. Only limited development is proposed in the largely rural hinterland which abuts North Yorkshire. Humberside County Council has recently submitted selective first Alterations to the County Structure Plan to the Secretary of State and these are likely to be the subject of an Examination in Public towards the end of 1991.
- 2.11 The detailed local plan policies to be implemented in that part of Humberside adjoining North Yorkshire are contained in the Pocklington and Western Parishes Local Plan, prepared by the East Yorkshire Borough Council, which has recently been placed on formal deposit.

Figure 1



### Local Plans in the Area of the York Green Belt

- 1 Vale of York Local Plan
- 2 Selby Rural Areas Local Plan
- 3 Southern Ryedale Local Plan (DRAFT)
- 4 Ryedale Rural Areas & Kirkbymoorside Local Plan
- 5 Ure & Ouse Recreation Plan
- 6 Harrogate Rural Areas Study
- 7 Pocklington & Western Parishes Local Plan

General Extent of the Green Belt



# CHAPTER THREE

## POLICY FRAMEWORK

### History of the York Green Belt

- 3.1 The history of York's Green Belt is a complex one covering a period of more than 30 years. Prior to local government reorganisation in 1974, the Greater York area, as presently defined, was divided between four authorities - the former East, North and West Riding County Councils and York City Council. In response to a Government request during the late 1950's, each County Authority proposed a Green Belt for its part of the Greater York area which, collectively, formed the York Green Belt.
- 3.2 These proposals, which have been amended on numerous subsequent occasions (both before and after local government reorganisation) were, however, never formally approved by the Secretary of State as no overall, co-ordinated approach to the definition of the Green Belt had been followed. In 1975, the Secretary of State decided to maintain a "sketch plan" Green Belt around the whole of York until such time as comprehensive proposals could be established.
- 3.3 In 1980, the principle of a York Green Belt was formally approved by the Secretary of State for the Environment as part of the North Yorkshire Structure Plan and was defined as "a belt whose outer edge is about 6 miles from York City centre". Following approval of the Structure Plan, the County Council in 1981 attempted to rationalise the boundaries of the sketch plan Green Belt and adopted a definition of the boundary for its own purposes. Although these boundaries had been the subject of discussions with the relevant District Councils, they have not been universally agreed and adopted.

### Existing Policy Context

- 3.4 The planning policy framework within which the Green Belt Local Plan has been prepared has three principal elements:-
  - i) Government policy, as expressed in Circulars, Planning Policy Guidance Notes and Ministerial Statements;
  - ii) the approved North Yorkshire County Structure Plan; and
  - iii) joint County/District proposals for meeting future development needs in Greater York, as defined in the "Greater York Study : A Strategy to 2006".

#### (i) Government Policy

- 3.5 The most up to date guidance on Green Belts is contained in "Planning Policy Guidance Note 2 (PPG2)", which draws together earlier Government advice in Circulars 42/55, 50/57 and 14/84. This PPG clearly restates the Government's continuing commitment to the principle of Green Belts and their protection from inappropriate development. That commitment can also be identified as a consistent thread running through other Government guidance issued during the past decade.
- 3.6 Account has also been taken of specific Government guidance concerning, for example, the definition of Green Belt boundaries. This advice is considered in more detail in relation to the specific issues identified later in this document.

#### (ii) The North Yorkshire County Structure Plan

- 3.7 The North Yorkshire County Structure Plan was approved with modifications by the Secretary of State for the Environment on the 26 November, 1980 and has been altered selectively on two subsequent occasions in 1987 and 1989.

- 3.8 The strategic approach adopted in the Plan affords high priority to the conservation and protection of the County's natural resources and environment and seeks to balance these objectives against the demand for development and change, much of which is generated from outside the County. In the Greater York area, a realistic balance is sought between the need for development and the need to protect the historic fabric and unique character of the City from development which is unsympathetic and inappropriate in terms of its scale, type and location.
- 3.9 In approving the Structure Plan in 1980, the Secretary of State accepted that there should be some restraint on the scale and pace of development in the County. This strategy was again endorsed by the Secretary of State when approving County Structure Plan Alteration No. 1 in 1987. The Secretary of State also recognised at that time the particular needs of Greater York and added to the appropriate Structure Plan policies a specific Greater York dimension. Guidelines for both housing and employment needs up to 1996 were established.
- 3.10 In the context of the approved strategy of giving high priority to the conservation of the County's environment, it is entirely appropriate that the long established Green Belt policies applied around York should be carried forward.
- 3.11 In approving the Structure Plan in 1980, the Secretary of State confirmed the principle of a Green Belt encircling the City, defining it as "a belt whose outer edge is about 6 miles from York City centre" (Policy E8).
- 3.12 Other policies within the approved Structure Plan also relate specifically to Green Belts. Policy E8(a) gives guidance on the factors to be taken into account in defining the precise boundary of Green Belts in Local Plans, while Policy E9 specifies the types of development that will normally be permitted in the Green Belt. Policy E10 deals with development in settlements which are not inset within the Green Belt and with the treatment of settlements where a need for more than limited (infill) development can be established. These policies are set out in full in Appendix 1.
- 3.13 While the Structure Plan confirms the principle of a Green Belt around York, specific proposals are also included which provide for sufficient land for residential and industrial purposes to be allocated to meet requirements arising in the Greater York area in the period up to 1996. Between 1981 and 1996 the approved Structure Plan requirement is for about 9,100 new dwellings (Policy H1) and some 215 acres of land for industry (Policy I5).
- 3.14 The County Council is currently preparing Alteration No 3 to the County Structure Plan. This will extend the end date for the Structure Plan to 2006 and will principally amend the provisions of those existing policies dealing with the scale of housing and employment development, as well as make provision for a new settlement or settlements around York.
- (iii) The Greater York Study
- 3.15 When approving the North Yorkshire County Structure Plan in 1980, the Secretary of State declined to endorse a specific policy framework for the Greater York area. Instead, the appropriate authorities (the County Council and the five 'Greater York' District Councils) were invited to consider further the development needs of the area. This exercise was completed in 1982 with the publication of the informal policy document 'Policies for Housing and Industrial Land in the Greater York Area' (September 1982).
- 3.16 The need for a more comprehensive approach to development in the Greater York area was confirmed by the Secretary of State in 1987 when he approved a specific Greater York dimension in Alteration No 1 to the Structure Plan, providing for the first time a statutory level of provision for housing and employment. Using this context, the Greater York Authorities - the County Council and Hambleton, Harrogate, Ryedale, Selby and York

District Councils - have subsequently prepared and adopted a long term development strategy for the area. This has two principal functions:-

- i) to roll forward the provisions of the 1982 document to the new Structure Plan end-date of 1996; and
  - ii) to establish a longer term, i.e. post-1996, development strategy for the area in order to facilitate early definition and formal adoption of detailed boundaries for the York Green Belt.
- 3.17 In February 1990 the Greater York Authorities published the "Greater York Study : A Strategy to 2006". Public consultation was undertaken on this document during March and April 1990.
- 3.18 The response to this public consultation generally endorsed the principal elements of the recommended development strategy which seeks to:-
- i) make provision for a total of about 6100 dwellings in the period up to 2006;
  - ii) make provision for 350 acres of employment land;
  - iii) make use of land within the urban area where appropriate;
  - iv) allow only limited peripheral development around the built-up area in locations which do not conflict with Green Belt objectives;
  - v) limit development in the villages surrounding the City;
  - vi) accommodate much of the longer term (post-1996) development requirement, about 2000 dwellings, in a new settlement(s) located beyond the outer edge of the Green Belt;
  - vii) maintain a relatively tight Green Belt around the existing built-up area; and
  - viii) obviate the need for substantial areas of "white land" to be identified around the edge of the built-up area.
- The strategy received a wide measure of endorsement, with continued protection of the Green Belt around York attracting particularly strong public support. Following consideration of the response, the Greater York Authorities have formally adopted the Greater York Study.
- 3.19 The provisions of the adopted development strategy are fully reflected in the Green Belt boundaries proposed in this Local Plan. The Greater York Study also identified several areas to be investigated in more detail in the context of this Local Plan in respect of their development potential. These sites are assessed in respect of their contribution to Green Belt objectives in Chapter 5.
- 3.20 The principle of a new settlement or settlements around York will be embodied in Alteration No 3 to the County Structure Plan.

# CHAPTER FOUR

## PURPOSE OF THE YORK GREEN BELT

### Objectives

- 4.1 As already noted in para 3.11, the County Structure Plan establishes the principle of a Green Belt around the City of York and defines it as comprising a belt whose outer edge is about six miles from York City Centre. The Structure Plan does not, however, define the precise boundaries of the Green Belt - either on its outer or inner edges or around settlements which, although located within the Green Belt, have significant populations and a generally built-up character and should on this basis be inset in the Green Belt. That is a principal function of this Local Plan.
- 4.2 The main objective of the York Green Belt is to safeguard the special character of the historic City. This has been clearly established in Government publications ("Green Belts", HMSO, 1988), Parliamentary Statements and Ministerial decisions on appeals. This is one of the principal purposes of Green Belts as identified in PPG2.
- 4.3 In planning terms, the open spaces which extend into the urban area from the open countryside are a major element contributing to the special character of the City. These 'green wedges' make a significant contribution to the amenity and environment of the urban area, in addition to providing opportunities for outdoor recreation and leisure pursuits. They represent an important and integral part of the Green Belt which needs to be safeguarded from inappropriate development.
- 4.4 In addition, PPG2 identifies several other objectives which Green Belts are intended to serve. These are:-
- (i) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
  - (ii) to safeguard the surrounding countryside from further encroachment;
  - (iii) to prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another; and
  - (iv) to assist in urban regeneration.
- A further aim identified in PPG2 is the important positive role that Green Belts have in providing access to open countryside for the urban population. Such access may be for active outdoor sports or for passive recreation. Green Belts also have a positive role in enhancing and improving the character and appearance of the countryside adjoining major centres of population. Within the York Green Belt, any individual site may fulfil one or more of these objectives.

### Timescale for the Proposals

- 4.5 PPG2 indicates that the essential characteristic of Green Belts is their permanence and that their protection must be maintained as far ahead as can be seen. Frequent changes to Green Belt boundaries will devalue the concept. It is important, therefore, that the York Green Belt Local Plan establishes boundaries that will endure.
- 4.6 In preparing the York Green Belt Local Plan, the County Council has taken full account of the agreed conclusions of the 'Greater York Study : A Strategy to 2006'. This establishes a strategy which involves only limited development on the edge of the built-up area and in surrounding villages, in locations which do not conflict with Green Belt objectives. Accommodation of much of the longer term development requirement is proposed in a new settlement, or settlements, to be located beyond the outer boundary of the Green Belt. This enables a relatively tight Green Belt to be maintained around the existing built-up area.
- 4.7 Clearly, one of the consequences of the new settlement strategy is that it avoids the need for major areas of "white land" to be identified to accommodate possible development needs after 2006. It also means that large scale peripheral or freestanding development on the immediate fringe of the urban area will be precluded, allowing the Green Belt to remain largely unaltered.

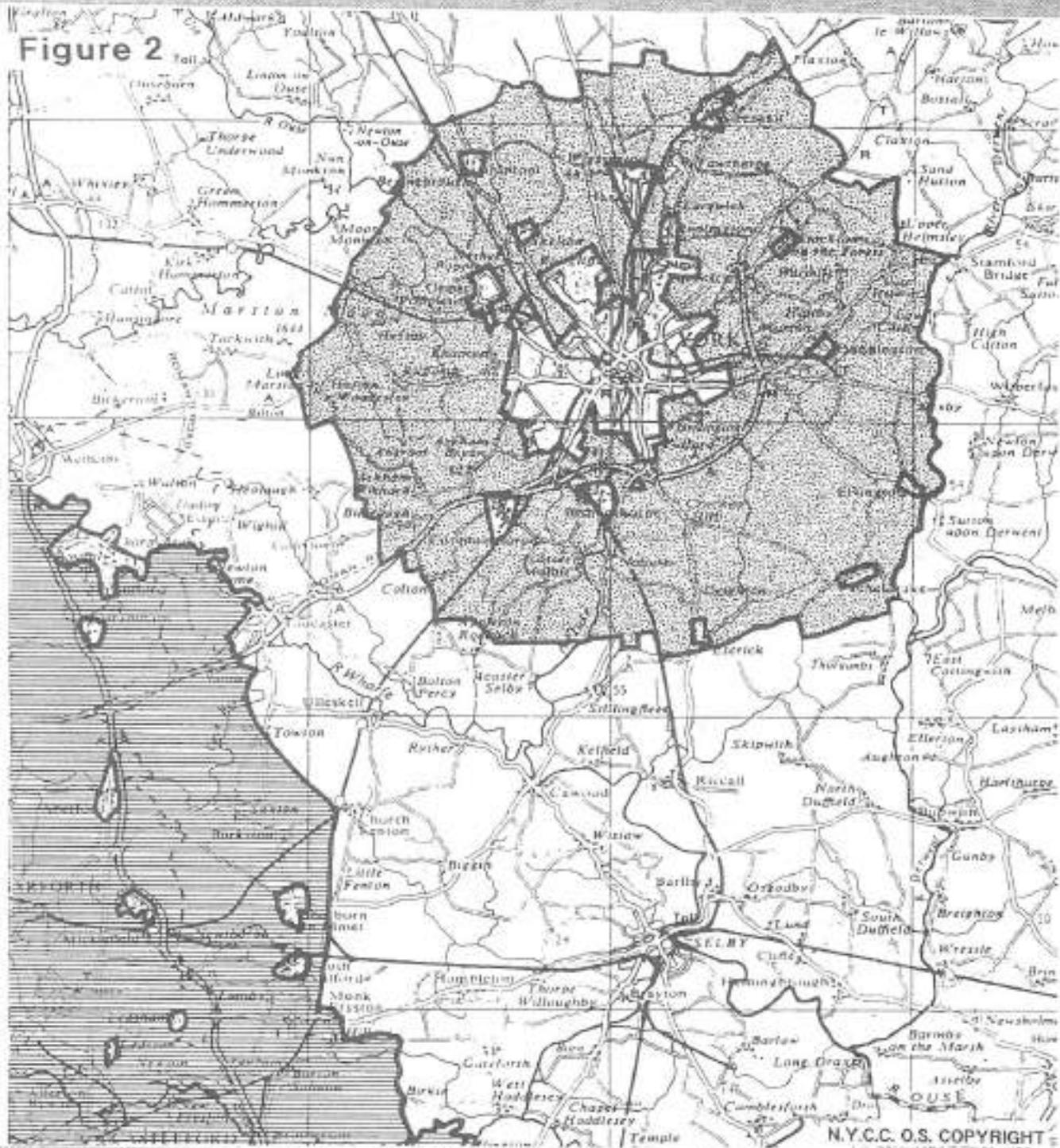
## Factors in Defining the York Green Belt Boundaries

- 4.8 In defining the boundary of the York Green Belt, account has been taken of the following:-
- (i) **the need to clearly reflect, and be compatible with, the objectives of Green Belt designation as set out in paragraphs 4.1 to 4.4.** Also relevant in this respect are the criteria in Structure Plan Policy E8(a). In summary these provide for the need for the Green Belt to:-
    - (a) regulate the size and shape of urban areas;
    - (b) prevent the coalescence of settlements;
    - (c) preserve open areas extending into the urban area which have recreational or amenity value; and
    - (d) preserve easy access to open countryside and outdoor recreation.
  - (ii) **the York Green Belt, as approved in the North Yorkshire County Structure Plan, is an encircling Green Belt whose outer edge is about 6 miles from the City Centre; and**
  - (iii) **the provisions of the "Greater York Study : A Strategy to 2006"** which establishes an agreed long term development strategy for the Greater York area and includes specific proposals for the development of sites for residential and employment use in the period to 2006. This strategy is capable of accommodating the assessed urban development land needs of the Greater York area arising within the foreseeable future without compromising Green Belt objectives.
- 4.9 Government guidance also indicates that while Green Belts often contain areas of attractive landscape, the quality of the rural landscape is not a material factor in the designation or continued protection of Green Belts. It follows, therefore, that open land outside the built-up area is suitable in principle for inclusion within the Green Belt irrespective of its use.
- 4.10 At a more detailed level, it is clearly essential that Green Belt boundaries should be easily defensible and, wherever possible, follow features on the ground that are distinct and unlikely to change - for example, rivers, roads, railways, woodlands and the edges of built-up areas. Detailed criteria for defining the York Green Belt boundary are set out in Appendix 2.

## Relationship of the York Green Belt to the West Yorkshire Green Belt

- 4.11 The well-established, statutory West Yorkshire Green Belt is located some 10 miles to the west of the centre of York (Figure 2). The detailed boundaries of this Green Belt in Selby District have recently been revised in the Selby Rural Areas Local Plan which was formally adopted in June 1990. Approved Structure Plan policies clearly intend that the West Yorkshire and the York Green Belts should remain separate. An extension of the York Green Belt to link up with the West Yorkshire Green Belt would in no way contribute to the main purpose of the York Green Belt which is to safeguard the special character of the City. Similarly, Policy E8 of the Structure Plan makes no provision for major extensions to the York Green Belt beyond 6 miles from the City centre.
- 4.12 Although the County Structure Plan makes no provision for extending the outer boundary of the York Green Belt significantly beyond a 6 mile radius, there are clearly major areas where the Green Belt as presently defined does not reflect the 6 mile requirement. In defining the outer boundary of the York Green Belt, careful consideration has, therefore, been given to the need for the area designated as Green Belt to more satisfactorily reflect approved strategic guidance. This is most significant in the areas to the west and south-west of the City where the outer boundary, as defined on an interim basis in 1981, lies significantly within the 6 mile radius.
- 4.13 A principal concern of the local authorities at that time was that any extension of the York Green Belt to the 6 mile line would attract unnecessary development to the small gap which remained between the York and West Yorkshire Green Belts.

Figure 2



## The York Green Belt in relation to the West Yorkshire Green Belt

GENERAL EXTENT OF GREEN BELTS:

YORK



WEST YORKSHIRE



Scale

0

10kms



- 4.14 There is no evidence, however, to suggest that this has happened. To the west of York, in Harrogate District, where Green Belt policies have been applied over a more extensive area than proposed in either the County Council's interim document or the Structure Plan, there is no evidence that the remaining area between the two Green Belts has been subject to any greater development pressure than in remaining areas in Selby District where Green Belt policies have only been implemented within the area defined in the 1981 interim proposals.
- 4.15 Since no other justification was put forward at that time to warrant such a major departure from the provisions of Structure Plan Policy E8, it is concluded that, in defining the outer boundary of the Green Belt in this Local Plan, a more appropriate alternative line should be sought which more closely satisfies approved strategic guidance.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### THE GREEN BELT BOUNDARIES

- 5.1 A principal function of this Local Plan is to define the precise boundaries of the York Green Belt.

#### POLICY 1

#### THE YORK GREEN BELT WILL COVER THE AREAS DEFINED AS GREEN BELT ON THE PROPOSALS MAP

- 5.2 The description and justification of the proposed Green Belt boundaries is set out in the following sections. These deal in turn with the outer boundary, the inner boundary and those settlements which it is proposed should be the subject of insets in the Green Belt. The description of both the inner and outer boundaries is divided into sections, which run from the River Ouse, north west of York, in a clockwise direction. Where reference is made to changes from the 'existing' boundary, this relates to the boundary which the County Council has previously adopted as its own understanding and definition of the Sketch Plan Green Belt.
- 5.3 The detailed proposals in the following sections need to be read in conjunction with the Proposals Map.

#### A. THE OUTER BOUNDARY

- 5.4 For the purposes of this Local Plan, the County Council has taken as the starting point the Sketch Plan boundaries to which it has been working in recent years. There are, however, a number of instances where the line of that outer boundary runs significantly beyond the six mile parameter established in the Structure Plan. Further, significant areas - notably to the south and west - are significantly within the six mile guideline.
- 5.5 The proposals review these anomalies. The boundaries now proposed more closely relate to the approved Structure Plan guidelines and at the same time seek to adopt recognisable physical features such as those identified in para 4.10.
- 5.6 The outer boundary is considered in four sections (Figure 3):-

##### SECTION 1 : HAMBLETON DISTRICT

##### SECTION 2 : RYEDALE DISTRICT

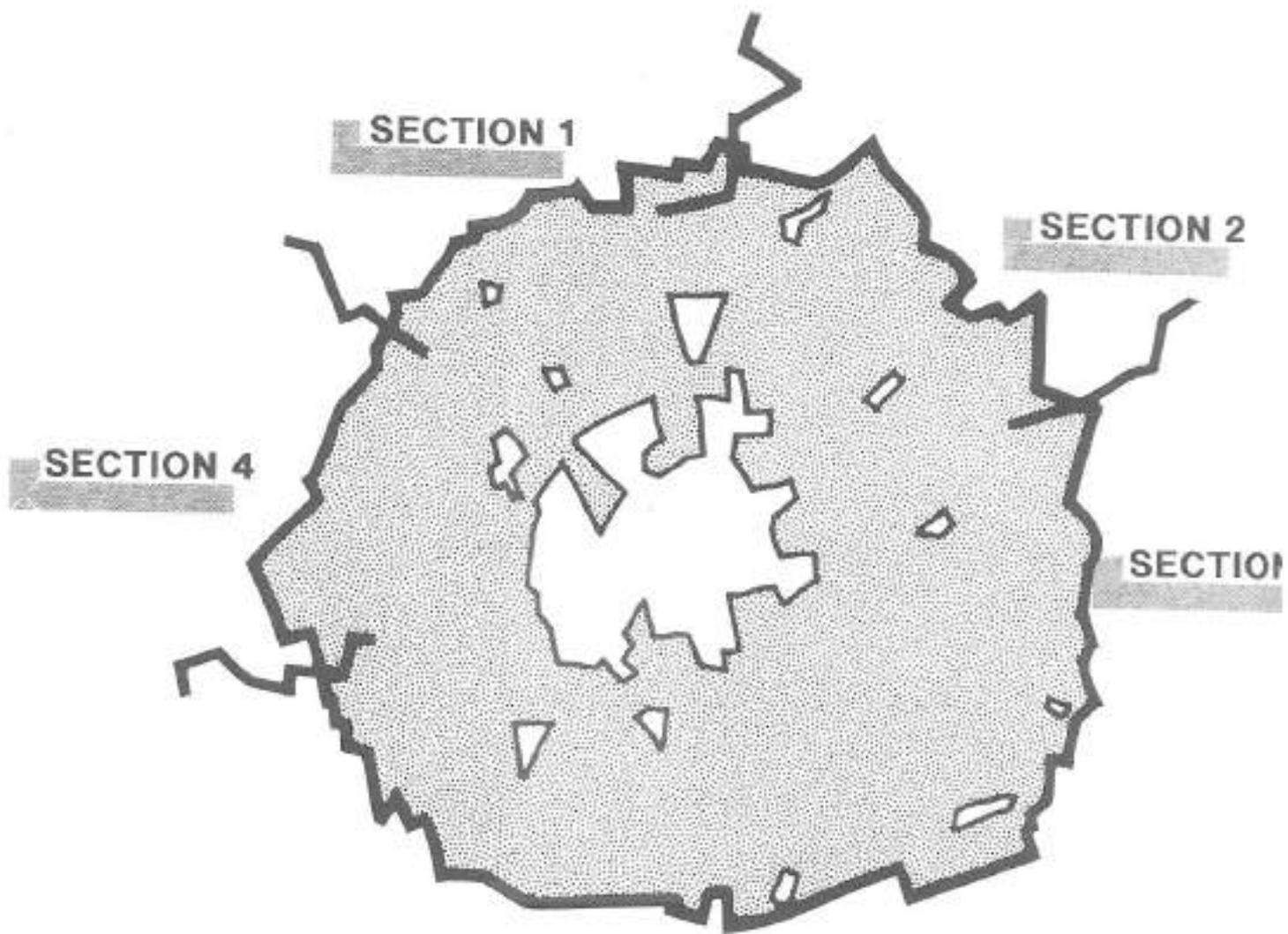
##### SECTION 3 : SELBY DISTRICT

##### SECTION 4 : HARROGATE DISTRICT

##### SECTION 1 : HAMBLETON DISTRICT

- 5.7 Commencing at the District Boundary with Harrogate (the River Ouse), the proposed boundary follows the line of Wadeland Dike until it meets Beningbrough Lane just north of Beningbrough. From Beningbrough Lane it then turns up High Moor Lane and crosses the East Coast Main Line by Chapman's Bridge, following Chapman's Lane to Hall Farm. From Hall Farm the proposed boundary runs via Laund House to Laund Bridge, following Huby Burn to the Sutton-on-the-Forest road. The proposed boundary then follows this road northwards to meet with the drainage ditch just south of Grange Farm Cottage before following the District boundary along a track and ditch eastwards between Haxby Wood and Low Car Wood, then turning north and east to Hundred Acre Farm.

**Figure 3**



**Sections of the Outer Green Belt Boundary  
(refer to Chapter 5A)**

GENERAL EXTENT OF THE GREEN BELT



#### Comment

5.8 Between the River Ouse and Laund House the proposed boundary coincides with the existing boundary. It is well defined and complies with Structure Plan Guidance. The proposed line differs from the existing boundary in two places:-

- (i) **Between Laund House and Haxby Wood.** Here, an extension is proposed which more closely reflects the approved Structure Plan 6 mile guideline, whilst following readily identifiable features on the ground.
- (ii) **In the vicinity of Hundred Acre Farm.** The line has been revised to better reflect identifiable features on the ground.

#### SECTION 2 : RYEDALE DISTRICT

5.9 From Hundred Acre Farm the proposed boundary runs eastwards to Hoxne Place, then turns briefly south towards Strensall before following Duncombe Lane eastwards to Lock House. From Lock House it follows the River Foss north eastwards for a quarter of a mile before cutting south along a new drainage ditch to rejoin Black Dyke near Walbutts. The boundary follows this watercourse across the railway line to York Lane and White Carr Nooking before following the deep drainage ditch and edge of Sandburn Wood to join the A64 about a quarter of a mile south of Claxton Grange Cottages. From here the proposed boundary follows the A64 towards York, before following the track south of High Plumps and the edge of White Syke Plantation to the Sand Hutton road. The proposed boundary then follows the road towards Gate Helmsley, to meet the disused railway line which it follows as far as the A166 and the District boundary.

#### Comment

5.10 The proposed line deviates from the existing boundary in three areas:

- (i) **To the north of Lock House.** Here a small amendment is necessary as recent drainage works associated with the Walbutts sewage treatment plant make the existing boundary untenable.
- (ii) **Between York Lane and the A64.** The existing boundary follows York Lane eastwards before cutting south-eastwards to follow high voltage power lines until it joins the main A64 York Malton road. Although the removal of electricity pylons is expensive and unlikely, such features represent an unsuitable boundary. They clearly do not provide a feature "on the ground" and additionally take the boundary almost 7/8 miles from the City Centre.
- (iii) **Between the A64 and the disused railway line.** An extension is proposed which brings the proposed boundary closer to the 6 mile guideline, while following readily identifiable features on the ground.

#### SECTION 3 : SELBY DISTRICT

5.11 From the A166 road the proposed boundary runs along the line of the disused railway to meet the River Derwent. From there it follows the river, (which forms the County boundary with Humberside), southwards to Wheldrake Ings. The proposed boundary then runs westwards from the River Derwent, around Waterhouse Garths and the southern edge of Mattie Brown Wood and along Keldcarr drain to Gilbertson's Wood. From Gilbertson's Wood the boundary runs westwards along Wheldrake Lane, crossing the Escrick to North Duffield road, then through the grounds of Queen Margaret's School before crossing the A19 Trunk Road and past the sewage works to the former railway line (now a cycletrack).

5.12 From the former railway line the proposed boundary runs westwards along the southern edge of Moreby Far Wood. It then crosses the B1222 to Home Farm before turning south to follow the River Ouse for a short distance. The proposed boundary then strikes westwards to follow a track/hedgerow, the northern edge of the east-west runway of the former Acaster Airfield and a tree belt to Broad Lane which it follows southwards for about 400 yards. From Broad Lane the boundary runs westwards to the north of North Hall Farm, before following "The Fleet" northwards to a point west of Woolas Hall Farm. It then runs generally westwards before crossing the East Coast Main Line at Colton Bridge. The proposed line of the Green Belt then follows Braegate

Lane, Street Lane and Colton Lane and a tree belt and drain to the A64 Trunk Road which it follows to a point just before Streehouse Farm. From here the boundary follows Bradfield Lane and field boundaries to the York Road approximately one mile west of Askham Richard. The boundary then turns westwards along York Road to Healaugh Gate before turning north along Healaugh Beck to the Harrogate District boundary.

#### Comment

- 5.13 Between Gilbertson's Wood and the former railway line the proposed boundary follows the present line of the Green Belt. This section of the outer boundary is readily identifiable on the ground and reflects strategic guidance on the extent of the Green Belt.
- 5.14 A number of significant alterations to the existing outer boundary elsewhere in Selby District are, however, proposed.
- 5.15 Between the River Derwent and Gilbertson's Wood, the present boundary lies more than 8½ miles from York City Centre. This is clearly inconsistent with strategic policy guidance on the general extent of the Green Belt. The proposed boundary has therefore been redrawn to reflect this guidance, consistent with the need to identify a firm and defensible boundary while ensuring that Wheldrake village remains inset within the Green Belt.
- 5.16 The present boundary to the south, south-west and west of York is also clearly anomalous in relation to the approved Structure Plan definition of the extent of the Green Belt. Between the former railway line and the East Coast Main Line, it lies, on average, no more than 4½ miles from the City Centre, clearly falling well short of the 6 mile guideline in the Structure Plan. In addition the settlements of Bilbrough and Colton lie within the 6 mile radius but are currently outside the Green Belt.
- 5.17 It is apparent that in defining the existing outer boundary in Harrogate and Selby Districts in 1981, the main consideration was the relationship between the York and West Yorkshire Green Belts and the perceived need to maintain as wide a gap as possible between the two in order to prevent development pressures being concentrated in the gap between them.
- 5.18 The County Council is aware that its proposals for the outer boundary of the York Green Belt extend designation into areas covered by two adopted local plans, the Ryedale Rural Areas and Kirkbymoorside Local Plan (which does not contain any area of Green Belt) and the Selby Rural Areas Local Plan (which delineates five segments of Green Belt to the south of York).
- 5.19 The County Council is also fully aware of the provisions of Government guidance incorporated in Circular 14/84 and Planning Policy Guidance Note 2 that, in circumstances where Green Belt boundaries have been defined in adopted Local Plans these should be altered only exceptionally. The County Council believes that, in the circumstances of the York Green Belt, it is fully justified in putting forward proposals which seek to vary the decisions taken previously in these two adopted Local Plans.
- 5.20 In neither case was the District Council able to consider the wider issues of the York Green Belt beyond their District Council area or those other parts of their Council's area which might be affected by Green Belt issues.
- 5.21 In any event, the kind of 'exceptional circumstances' noted in the guidance is considered to apply in the case of the York Green Belt Local Plan and it is appropriate, therefore, for the County Council to reflect these exceptional circumstances in the interests of securing the most appropriate boundaries for the York Green Belt consistent with the provisions of approved strategic planning policy.
- 5.22 Although Green Belt policies have been applied around York for almost 30 years, comprehensive boundaries have never been incorporated in any approved development plan(s) covering the whole of the York area. There remains, therefore, considerable uncertainty over the precise area to which Green Belt policies are intended to apply.
- 5.23 As noted previously, only five relatively small segments of the Green Belt have been formally incorporated in an adopted local plan and these are 'anomalous' in respect of their conformity with approved strategic policy which identifies the York Green Belt as a 'belt whose outer edge is about 6 miles from York City Centre'. In parts, these adopted segments of the Green Belt run only between 4 and 5 miles from the City Centre.

- 5.24 At the time the two local plans were certified as being in general conformity with the approved County Structure Plan there was no expectation that a comprehensive Green Belt Local Plan would be prepared. It would not have been appropriate to withhold certification and prevent the adoption of the wider proposals in each of the local plans. At the time both plans were certified, the only definition of the outer boundary of the York Green Belt was that contained in the informal line proposed by the County Council in 1981 and adopted in 1982 as an interim policy for development control purposes.
- 5.25 The suggested line of the outer boundary of the Green Belt was not adopted by all the Greater York Authorities and now, with the commitment of all six Greater York Authorities to a definition of the York Green Belt as a whole, it is appropriate to undertake a complete study of the Green Belt boundaries - inner, outer, inset - and development control policies.
- 5.26 An alternative outer boundary which more closely coincides with the 6 mile guideline is now proposed. In extending the Green Belt in this area, particular attention has been given to:-
- (i) the need to adopt a consistent approach to the definition of the outer boundary. Consequently, the current proposals throughout the York area include amendments to either extend or draw in the outer boundary as previously defined to a line which more closely reflects the 6 mile guideline, consistent with the need to identify a firm, defensible boundary.
  - (ii) experience in Harrogate District suggests that undue pressure for development has not arisen in the gap between the West Yorkshire Green Belt and the area, extending up to 8 miles from the City Centre, where the Borough Council has consistently implemented Green Belt policies since 1984.
- 5.27 It is therefore concluded that there is insufficient justification for departing from approved strategic guidelines in this part of the Greater York area.
- 5.28 The line as proposed takes in the villages of Bilbrough and Colton as well as placing the northern part of the former Acaster Airfield site within the Green Belt. A 6 mile radius drawn from the city centre runs very close to the east-west runway of the former airfield. The use of this recognisable feature is consistent with Government guidance on the definition of the outer boundary. The proposed line in this general area to the south west of the City is complementary to the most appropriate line in Harrogate District.

#### SECTION 4 : HARROGATE DISTRICT

- 5.29 After leaving Selby District the proposed boundary runs north to the water works pumping station, past Keepers Cottage, and along Speng Lane towards Hutton Wandesley, before turning westwards up the track alongside the shelter belt known as Bustard Belt. From here it runs north by way of a track to Coronation Belt. It then follows field boundaries to the Wetherby Road. Turning east along Wetherby Road to Rupert House, the boundary then follows hedgerows and field boundaries and a track to Tockwith Road and Atterwith Lane. From Atterwith Lane the proposed boundary continues northwards along Marston Lane, Church Lane, Cockhill Lane and Burnt Close Lane to join with the River Ouse just downstream of Beningbrough.

#### Comment

- 5.30 Between the River Ouse to the north of York and Atterwith Lane, the existing outer boundary in Harrogate District runs broadly about 6 miles distant from York City Centre. The southern-most boundary is, however, drawn more tightly at around 5 miles. It is proposed to extend this southern and western part of the boundary closer to 6 miles. This brings the villages of Angram, Hutton Wandesley and Long Marston into the Green Belt.
- 5.31 Green Belt policies have been applied within this general area and indeed in areas further to the west for several years by Harrogate Borough Council. Although the proposed extension to the boundary does not, in fact, include all the areas to which Green Belt policy has previously applied, it does relate the boundary more closely to the Structure Plan 6 mile guideline.

## B. THE INNER BOUNDARY

5.32 The policy document 'Greater York Study - A Strategy to 2006', which has been endorsed by all the Greater York Authorities, proposes that only limited further peripheral growth around the existing urban area should be permitted, and that the longer term development needs of Greater York should be accommodated in a new community or communities located beyond the outer boundary of the Green Belt. In adopting this strategy, the Greater York Authorities have accepted that the inner boundary of the Green Belt should be drawn tightly around the existing urban area avoiding the need to identify large areas of "white land" to cater for longer term development needs. This is, therefore, the basis on which the examination of the inner boundary has been made. During this process a number of key sites on the periphery of the City have been given particular consideration in accordance with the Greater York Study.

5.33 The use of Green Belt policies to protect land from development pressure is only appropriate where the land in question clearly has a function in promoting Green Belt objectives. On this basis, parks, allotments, cemeteries and schools adjoining open countryside and with strong physical and/or visual links with the countryside are generally appropriate for inclusion within the Green Belt. Conversely, parks and open land surrounded by urban development which exhibit no strong physical and/or visual links with the open countryside are not considered to be appropriate areas for inclusion in the Green Belt. The proposals take into account any existing planning permissions.

### SECTION 1 : SHIPTON ROAD TO WIGGINTON ROAD

5.34 From the A19 Shipton Road, the proposed inner boundary follows the line of the Outer Ring Road to the eastern end of the Clifton Moor Industrial Estate. It then follows the eastern boundary of the industrial area towards the City, parallel to Wigginton Road.

5.35 The proposed boundary then dips south west to Water Lane following the road down towards Clifton before crossing over and turning north east up Bur Dike, along the rear of the properties on Kingsway North and around the school before turning south east to Wigginton Road.

#### Comment

5.36 Between Rawcliffe Manor and the northern end of Water Lane the proposed boundary coincides with the existing boundary. The proposed line, however, departs from the existing line in two distinct areas:-

- (i) To the east of the A19, between Manor Lane to the south and the Outer Ring Road to the north, the line is drawn to exclude the area granted planning permission (on appeal) for housing and the adjacent small area between the appeal site and the A19. These areas no longer perform any specific Green Belt function.
- (ii) The open land lying to the north-east of Water Lane except for the three fields at the southern end is now proposed to be added to the Green Belt.

5.37 The Water Lane site was identified in the draft Southern Ryedale Local Plan (1981) as an area of "white land". Its position has, however, been reviewed in respect of its potential contribution to Green Belt objectives. The majority of the site exhibits three relevant characteristics:-

- (a) the area forms a green "wedge" extending to within a mile of the City Centre. It is the existence of green wedges such as this, extending towards the heart of the City, which contribute to its character and maintain its form. Although not on a primary radial route, this green "wedge" is nevertheless considered to perform a valid Green Belt function in this locality;
- (b) the site serves to keep the community of "Clifton Within" separate from the extensive industrial development which has taken place on the former airfield site to the north. Its designation as Green Belt would guard against the coalescence of these areas. The scale of existing and proposed commercial developments at Clifton Moor reinforces the significant contribution that the Water Lane site makes to the existing green wedge in this part of the City; and

- (c) PPG2 states that "Green Belts have a positive role in providing access to open countryside for the urban population". Whilst most of the site is not in public ownership, the majority of it is well used for passive recreation and has considerable potential for more extensive recreation/leisure use.

## SECTION 2 : WIGGINTON ROAD TO MONK STRAY

- 5.38 From Wigginton Road the proposed boundary runs along the rear of development which has taken place at Bootham Stray Gates, skirting the southern edge of the former Rugby Football ground to Haxby Road. The boundary then follows Haxby Road northwards before turning west to the rear of the recent housing development in New Earswick to the north of the nature reserve. From here, the proposed boundary follows the rear boundaries of the residential properties on White Rose Avenue and Rowan Avenue, to the corner of Rose Tree Grove. From this point it follows the field boundary northwards to the end of Park Avenue before turning east to Haxby Road. It then follows the track and tree line immediately to the north of the school buildings on the eastern side of Haxby Road before turning south along the field boundary to Willowbank.
- 5.39 From Willowbank the boundary follows the River Foss and the rear boundaries of properties northwards to the west of Huntington, then follows the edge of existing development on the northern and eastern fringes of Huntington, down to New Lane and around the existing and committed industrial developments at Pigeon Cote Farm back to New Lane. The proposed boundary then follows the edge of the existing built up area southwards to A1036 Malton Road, before following the edge of the properties on the northern side of the A1036 towards the City and passing around Heworth Golf Course to Malton Road.

### Comment

- 5.40 For the majority of this section the proposed boundary follows the existing line, as this is clearly identifiable and appropriate. It differs however in five areas:-
- (i) The revised boundary takes into account the extension at Rowntree's factory, Bootham Stray Gates.
  - (ii) This proposed boundary removes from the "Sketch Plan" Green Belt, the site at **Haxby Road, New Earswick**, identified as suitable for housing post-1996 in the Greater York Study. Part of this site was the subject of a planning appeal, following refusal of permission on prematurity and Green Belt grounds in 1989. The Inspector who heard the appeal recommended that the appeal be upheld and in so doing made it quite clear that in his opinion the site did not perform a Green Belt function. The Secretary of State, however, dismissed the appeal, taking the view that removal of the site from the Green Belt should only be undertaken in the context of the Green Belt Local Plan.
  - (iii) To the north of **Joseph Rowntree School at New Earswick**, the revised boundary immediately to the north of the main school buildings maximises the effective width of the open space gap between New Earswick and Haxby.
  - (iv) To the west of **Huntington** the boundary has been revised to take account of extensions to rear gardens and residential commitments.
  - (v) The whole of **Heworth Golf Course** is now included in the Green Belt. Part of the area was designated in the 1956 York Development Plan for secondary school and school playing field use and has not previously been included in the Sketch Plan Green Belt. However, the area has subsequently been disposed of for golf course use. It is clearly desirable in these circumstances that the golf course is treated as a single unit.

## SECTION 3 : MONK STRAY TO HULL ROAD

- 5.41 The proposed boundary from Malton Road follows Stockton Lane and Elmfield Terrace, round existing development at Elm Park, and back to Stockton Lane immediately west of Christ Church. It then follows the northern side of Stockton Lane, around the Garage and the existing edge of the built up area of Heworth to Bad Bargain Lane. It then turns west along Bad Bargain Lane, then south and west around the properties on Meadlands. The line then follows the southern boundary of the school playing field and the rear of properties on Ambleside and Ennerdale Avenues before turning east along Osbaldwick Beck to Osbaldwick village.

- 5.42 From Osbaldwick village the proposed boundary follows the rear of properties on the north side of Osbaldwick Village/Murton Way. The line then follows the edge of the existing industrial estate and the line of the disused Derwent Valley Light Railway, before following Osbaldwick Beck southwards to Murton Way. The line then runs around the existing industrial estate and the electricity transformer station to the A1079 Hull Road.

**Comment**

- 5.43 The Greater York Study has identified land at Osbaldwick to the west of Metcalf Lane and north of Osbaldwick Beck as having development potential. However, no commitment to the site has been made pending assessment of any Green Belt potential the area might have. The area is split by the line of the former railway and comprises a number of arable fields and associated hedgerows amounting to around 58 acres. Accordingly, it is proposed to include this area in the Green Belt using the readily recognisable boundaries provided by the existing development.
- 5.44 Three further alterations to the existing boundary are proposed in this area:-
- (i) **Christ Church, Stockton Lane, and the handful of properties on Pasture Lane** are now included in the Green Belt. Stockton Lane is considered to be the most appropriate and defensible boundary.
  - (ii) The Draft Southern Ryedale Local Plan (1981) proposed that an area east of Springfield Close be excluded from the Green Belt to allow for development of recreational land. The line proposed in that plan, however, does not follow any recognisable features 'on the ground', and its proposed inclusion in the Green Belt would not preclude its use for playing fields.
  - (iii) The land between the line of the disused Derwent Valley Light Railway and the rear of the line of properties on the north side of Osbaldwick Village/Murton Way is now included in the Green Belt to reflect the existing built up edge in this area.

**SECTION 4 : HULL ROAD TO FULFORD ROAD**

- 5.45 From the junction of Hull Road with Field Lane the boundary follows the northern boundary of Field Lane to the edge of the built development, then turns northwards along the rear of properties on Sussex Road to the playing field boundary before crossing to Windmill Lane. From here, the boundary runs to the north of Mill House, along Windmill Lane, to Hull Road and then follows Thief Lane and the rear of properties on Newland Park Drive as far as Green Dykes Lane.
- 5.46 From Green Dykes Lane the proposed boundary follows Heslington Road, before turning south down Walmgate Stray and then westwards to Cemetery Road (the cemetery and allotment gardens being included in the Green Belt). The boundary then follows Cemetery Road before cutting eastwards to the rear of Edgeware Road and southwards to include the MOD sports ground. From here the boundary follows the western edge of Walmgate Stray to Mitchell Lane from where it follows the rear of properties at Low Moor and Eastward Avenue to Fulfordgate. It then runs southwards along the western boundary of the school and the rear of properties on School Lane to Main Street, Fulford.

**Comment**

- 5.47 A number of minor amendments to the existing boundary are incorporated into the proposed line in this section. They take account of planning permissions granted along the City fringes as well as the requirement to relate the boundary to features on the ground.

**SECTION 5 : FULFORD ROAD TO TADCASTER ROAD**

- 5.48 From Main Street, Fulford, the proposed boundary follows the rear of properties overlooking the River Ouse, following the substantial wall adjacent to the river path and broadly parallel to Love Lane and the riverside to Blue Bridge Lane on the eastern river bank. On the western river bank it is proposed that the Green Belt includes Nun Ings up to and including Rowntree Park and the adjacent caravan site to the north, by following the rear of properties in Nunthorpe to Bishopthorpe Road.

- 5.49 From Bishopthorpe Road the proposed boundary follows the edge of Terry's factory westwards, before turning north to Knavesmire Crescent and Albemarle Road then west along the northern edge of the allotment gardens to Mount Vale. The boundary then follows the western edge of Micklegate Stray down Tadcaster Road, around the rear of built development, to Knavesmire Wood. From here it follows the edge of the property boundaries on Dringthorpe Road, past the playing field at York Technical College and then closely follows the built development edge to Sim Balk Lane, which it follows to Tadcaster Road.

#### Comment

- 5.50 The boundary as proposed involves an extension alongside both banks of the River Ouse to Blue Bridge Lane (formerly it terminated at St Oswald's Road). This is an important green wedge running into the heart of the City adjacent to the river, providing good recreational links with the countryside beyond the urban area.
- 5.51 The proposed boundary also involves some minor adjustments to the Green Belt around York Technical College to relate the boundary to recognisable features on the ground. Consideration has been given to whether the whole of this area should be included in the Green Belt as several possible "institutional uses" exist to the east of Tadcaster Road. However, the recent construction of flats north of the school, coupled with the Tesco superstore and park and ride facility to the west, suggest that this would not be appropriate.

#### The London Bridge Site

- 5.52 The proposed boundary confirms the continued placement of this site in the Green Belt. The site, which is bounded by Sim Balk Lane, the A64 Southern Bypass, the A1036 Tadcaster Road and the Bypass slip road, is identified in the Greater York Study as a site which will be investigated in the Green Belt Local Plan to determine the strength of its contribution to Green Belt objectives and whether or not a case exists for its development for employment purposes.
- 5.53 The site is completely encircled by roads and although it is relatively low lying and not, therefore, visible from areas to the south of the Bypass (which is in any case on an embankment in this area) it is nevertheless, extremely visible from most other important vantage points. It is particularly prominent from the Southern Bypass, from the Tadcaster Road - one of the busiest approach roads into York - and from Sim Balk Lane. The site itself is open in aspect and represents the last remaining undeveloped piece of land between the urban area and the Southern Bypass. As such it represents a site of considerable strategic importance in Green Belt terms.
- 5.54 The development of this site would completely sever the open countryside to the west from the green wedge running almost into the heart of the City, based on the Knavesmire and Micklegate Stray. As noted in paragraph 4.3 the open spaces which extend into the urban area from the open countryside are a major element contributing to the special character of the City. The London Bridge site is no less than critical to the maintenance of the direct link which presently exists between this major green wedge and the open countryside. More than this, its loss to development would be likely to prejudice the case for maintaining the adjoining open land (non Stray land) on the north side of Sim Balk Lane undeveloped. Similar considerations would apply in respect of the land immediately to the west of the London Bridge site, enclosed by the Southern Bypass, the A1036 Tadcaster Road, the East Coast Main Line and the Bypass slip roads. With the important "central" site of London Bridge developed, there would be little effective reason from the point of view of securing Green Belt policy objectives for resisting development of either of the adjoining sites, since the link through from open countryside to the green wedge would already have been severed.
- 5.55 In conclusion, development of this particular site would, for the reasons given, constitute an unacceptable breach of Green Belt policy. Green Belt objectives must, therefore, override the site's undoubted employment potential. It is, therefore, proposed that the site remains in the Green Belt.

#### SECTION 6 : TADCASTER ROAD TO SHIPTON ROAD

- 5.56 From Tadcaster Road the proposed boundary follows the northern edge of the cemetery, the western edge of the Tesco development and the East Coast Main Line northwards towards Dringhouses. It then follows the rear of properties on Swale Avenue, Leven Road and Chaloners Road (enclosing the site of Hogg's Pond) before following Moor Lane (on its amended alignment) westwards to the edge of the built development north of Eastfield Farm.

- 5.57 In the Foxwood/Woodthorpe area it is proposed that the boundary be drawn roughly due south to north along the edge of the existing built development and the area of new housing off Osprey Close, but including the field and trees to the west of Acomb Wood Drive in the Green Belt. From the Foxwood/Woodthorpe development the boundary broadly follows the edge of existing developments to the A59 Boroughbridge Road. From here it is proposed that the boundary follows the Outer Ring Road to its junction with Millfield Lane.
- 5.58 From Millfield Lane the proposed boundary continues to follow the Outer Ring Road to the East Coast Main Line at Poppleton Ings, then follows the line southwards towards York, diverting from it to exclude the built area of the sewage works and following the edge of built development on the Clifton washlands, to Scarborough Bridge. From Scarborough Bridge it follows the rear of properties on the Clifton Ings before joining the A19 south of the Rugby ground. It then follows the A19 back to the Outer Ring Road.

#### Comment

- 5.59 The boundary to the west of the City remains broadly unchanged. There are, however, a number of changes affecting the line to the south and north of the City:-
- (i) **In the Moor Lane area**, the line proposed places a small number of properties on the southern side of Moor Lane within the Green Belt. However, it is considered that the road itself is the most appropriate Green Belt boundary in this vicinity.
  - (ii) **To the west of Acomb Wood Drive** the line places the remaining open area between Ashmead Close to the south and the new housing off Osprey Close to the north within the Green Belt.
  - (iii) The proposed line extends the significant green wedge running along the A19 and River Ouse further into the City as far as Scarborough Bridge. Several minor boundary adjustments have been made in order to relate the line to better features on the ground.
  - (iv) The line as proposed removes the land bounded by the A59, the Outer Ring Road and Millfield Lane from the Green Belt.

#### The Millfield Lane Site

- 5.60 This site is the second peripheral site identified in the Greater York Study for assessment in the context of this Green Belt Local Plan in order to determine whether or not a case exists for its removal from the Green Belt and its allocation for employment related uses.
- 5.61 The land at Millfield Lane is bounded to the south by the A59 Boroughbridge Road, to the north-west by the Outer Ring Road, to the east by Millfield Lane and land already committed to employment use and to the south east by West View Close. The site is presently in agricultural and recreational use (in the form of Civil Service playing fields).
- 5.62 In general locational terms there are undoubtedly similarities between the Millfield Lane and the London Bridge sites. Both are located on the immediate periphery of the built-up area of the City just inside the Outer Ring Road and each has a similar relationship to significant settlements located on the opposite (outer) side of the Outer Ring Road (the Poppletons and Bishopthorpe respectively). Both are presently in the Green Belt.
- 5.63 The two sites, however, differ in respect of the weight of their respective contributions to Green Belt objectives. The Millfield Lane site does not form part of a green wedge extending into the City, unlike the London Bridge site. Its potential relationship to the major open space wedge centred on the River Ouse and located between the A19 and the East Coast Main Line has already been blocked by existing and committed industrial/commercial development on the east side of Millfield Lane which extends right up to the Outer Ring Road. It is also physically contained and, unlike the London Bridge site, its release would not prejudice adjacent Green Belt land.
- 5.64 It is concluded, therefore, that the Millfield Lane site can be excluded from the Green Belt and utilised for employment-related use without serious consequences for Green Belt objectives and without prejudicing the ability to resist development pressures in the open countryside, both to the south of the A59 and between the Outer Ring Road and the Poppletons.

### Clifton Hospital

- 5.65 It is not intended to remove Clifton Hospital from the Green Belt; this institution covers a large area in an important and prominent location and any redevelopment resulting from its closure must respect Green Belt principles and comply with the guidance given in PPG2 and Policy 6 of this Local Plan.

## C . VILLAGES AND OTHER AREAS EXCLUDED FROM THE GREEN BELT

- 5.66 Structure Plan Policy E10 establishes that settlements intended to accommodate more than limited growth - defined as minor infilling-should be inset in the Green Belt. Since the Structure Plan was approved in 1980, several villages around York have experienced significant expansion; others still have outstanding commitments in the form of unimplemented permissions and undeveloped housing land allocations. In accordance with the provisions of Structure Plan Policy E10, these settlements were excluded from the Green Belt and it is proposed that they should, for the sake of consistency, remain inset - even in those cases where further substantial growth or expansion is neither possible nor desirable.
- 5.67 While the Greater York Study has specifically rejected further large scale expansion of villages as a component of the adopted long term development strategy (post-1996), it is not intended that any further development should be precluded. This would be damaging to the long term sustainability of the local community. It is important, however, that villages are treated consistently as regards their placement either within or outside the Green Belt.
- 5.68 Settlements which act as service centres providing a wide range of community-based facilities, and which have already experienced more than minor development, have substantial populations and therefore a generally built-up character, are proposed to be inset. Most of them are in fact currently inset. Villages which are small in scale, which do not have a range of locally based community facilities and which have experienced only very limited growth in the past, in the form of infill and small scale development, are reconfirmed as being included in the Green Belt and 'washed over' by the Green Belt designation. These villages will be subject to the specific provisions of proposed Green Belt Policy 4 as regards proposals for new buildings, changes of use or redevelopment.
- 5.69 The characteristics which have determined whether or not settlements are to be inset in the Green Belt are:-
- (i) they have already experienced significant growth, have substantial populations and a generally built up character;
  - (ii) they contain basic levels of facilities such as a primary school, at least one place of worship, a public house, several shops together with a post office and perhaps a library and doctors' surgery, and are likely to have a regular bus service.
- 5.70 On the basis of the above parameters the following villages are inset in the Green Belt and their inset boundaries defined on the Proposals Map:-

### HAMBLETON DISTRICT

- (i) Shipton (existing)

### HARROGATE DISTRICT

- (i) Upper and Nether Poppleton (existing)
- (ii) Rufforth (proposed)

### RYEDALE DISTRICT

- (i) Haxby and Wigginton (existing)
- (ii) Skelton (proposed)
- (iii) Stockton-on-the-Forest (proposed)
- (iv) Strensall (existing)

#### SELBY DISTRICT

- (i) Bishopthorpe (existing)
- (ii) Copmanthorpe (existing)
- (iii) Dunnington (existing)
- (iv) Elvington (existing)
- (v) Escrick (existing)
- (vi) Wheldrake (existing)

#### Other Areas

- 5.71 The significant industrial allocations in Ryedale and Selby Districts at **Murton, Dunnington and Elvington** have been excluded from the Green Belt for the avoidance of doubt. Additionally, the site of the former Fulford and Naburn Hospitals in Selby District has been inset in the Green Belt. The precise area excluded from the Green Belt reflects that for which planning permission has already been granted for development.
- 5.72 Two areas, at Earswick and to the south of Fulford, have previously been inset into the Green Belt. These built up areas do not however exhibit the characteristics outlined in para 5.69 and it is therefore proposed that they be "washed over" by the Green Belt (as indeed are many other similarly sized small settlements) for the purposes of consistency. Within these areas Green Belt policies will, therefore, apply.

#### Fosslands Farm Site

- 5.73 In 1989, following a Public Inquiry, the Secretary of State for the Environment refused a planning application for residential and recreational development on a significant area of land in the Sketch Plan Green Belt to the north of Earswick.
- 5.74 In his report the Inspector recognised that the boundaries of the draft Green Belt would need to be amended in connection with the identification of housing land supply beyond 1996 and that this should be undertaken within the parameters of the Greater York Study and the preparation of Local Plans.
- 5.75 The County Council has concluded that the special circumstances relating to the removal of the pig farm outweigh the Green Belt importance of this site.

## CHAPTER SIX

# GREEN BELT DEVELOPMENT CONTROL POLICIES

### Introduction

- 6.1 PPG2 indicates that general policies controlling development in the countryside apply with equal force in Green Belts but that there is, in addition, a general presumption against inappropriate development within them. The PPG also sets out additional guidance on the control to be exercised over development in Green Belts.
- 6.2 The following policies amplify national and strategic planning guidance. Strategic guidance is contained in Structure Plan Policies E9 and E10 which deal, respectively, with the types of development which are appropriate in the Green Belt and the control of development in villages which are not inset in the Green Belt.
- 6.3 The policies are concerned solely with control for Green Belt purposes. Consideration of any planning application in the Green Belt will, in addition, include all matters considered in a planning application elsewhere, for example, traffic, access and drainage. In these respects the Green Belt policies are complementary to those in other Local Plans in the Green Belt area.

### The Policies

#### POLICY 2

WITHIN THE GREEN BELT DEVELOPMENT WILL NOT NORMALLY BE PERMITTED UNLESS IT IS NECESSARY IN CONNECTION WITH:-

- (i) AGRICULTURE OR FORESTRY;
- (ii) OUTDOOR SPORT AND RECREATION;
- (iii) CEMETERIES OR INSTITUTIONS STANDING IN EXTENSIVE GROUNDS; OR
- (iv) OTHER USES APPROPRIATE IN A RURAL AREA.

#### Justification

- 6.4 PPG2 reaffirms the Government's commitment to Green Belts and the need to safeguard them from inappropriate development. It restates previous advice that planning permission should not be given, except in very special circumstances, for the construction of new buildings or the change of use or redevelopment of existing buildings for purposes other than those set out in Policy 2. This is also embodied in Structure Plan Policy E9.
- 6.5 Recent Government guidance and Ministerial Statements stress that protection of the Green Belt is an overriding planning consideration and one which, in the case of most forms of development, strongly militates against the granting of planning permission.

#### Agriculture and Forestry

- 6.6 Development in connection with agriculture or forestry will normally be appropriate in the Green Belt. Such development, however, must be shown to be necessary. Proposals will also need to be considered in relation to other strategic and local plan policies addressing, for example, the location of development and new agricultural dwellings.

### Outdoor Sport and Recreation

- 6.7 Outdoor Sport is a use which will often be appropriate in the Green Belt. Certain recreational facilities such as playing fields and golf courses cover extensive areas of land and also maintain the open character of the area. The provision of such facilities may, additionally, offer a means of improving the environmental quality of degraded land within the Green Belt. Some new buildings or suitable conversion of existing buildings (eg. to provide club-houses and changing rooms) may be necessary. Such buildings will only be acceptable where they are essential to the functioning of that use.

### Institutions

- 6.8 Cemeteries and institutions standing in extensive grounds are acceptable, in principle, in the Green Belt, being substantially open in character. However, when planning permission is sought for development for an institution in substantial grounds it will be necessary to demonstrate that there is a need for the proposed development to be located in an open, rather than a built-up, area.

### The University of York

- 6.9 The most significant "institution" located within the York Green Belt is the University of York. When planning permission was first granted for the development of the University in 1961, by the former East Riding County Council, Heslington and the open countryside surrounding the village had already been placed within the Green Belt in the proposals drawn up by that County Authority.
- 6.10 In deciding to grant planning permission for the development of the University, the former East Riding Authority clearly took the view that an institution such as a University would not be incompatible with the objectives sought by Green Belt designation and would help to preserve the open wedge of land between Heslington and the City.
- 6.11 The relatively low density of the University's subsequent development, in its parkland setting, has, over subsequent years, served to endorse the initial decision. In the context of this Green Belt Local Plan it is therefore proposed that the future growth of the University should take place within the Green Belt rather than being inset from it, since such action would be likely to open the way for general development pressures to be exerted within the area likely to be needed in order to meet the future land requirements of the University's expansion programme. This would not only severely constrain the ability of the University to grow to its projected long term student population, but would also pave the way for a general expansion of the built-up area of the City into what presently constitutes a significant green wedge based on Walmgate Stray.
- 6.12 It is proposed, therefore, that the University's predicted future expansion should continue to be viewed as "institutional" development and that general development pressures should continue to be resisted by the application of Green Belt policies across the general area lying between the City and the Southern Bypass.
- 6.13 Such an approach is consistent with the provisions of Policy 2(iii). New development will, as a consequence, only be viewed as appropriate within the general area lying to the south and east of the present extent of the University campus if it is clearly related to and necessary in connection with the future expansion of the University. The preparation of a comprehensive plan and brief to identify the short, medium and long term expansion plans of the University should be prepared to clarify and co-ordinate further development in this area and to ensure the long term integrity of the Green Belt around Heslington.
- 6.14 Until such time as a plan and brief are prepared, any expansion of the University will be required to comply with the general provisions of Policy 2 and with the more specific requirements of Policy 3.

### Other Uses Appropriate in a Rural Area

- 6.15 Other forms of development may also be appropriately located in the Green Belt.
- 6.16 Minerals can be worked only where they are found. Extraction need not be incompatible with Green Belt objectives, providing that high environmental standards are maintained and that the site is well restored. In particular cases there may, however, be good reasons for not granting planning permission. Green Belt designation may also help to conserve valuable mineral resources by preventing inappropriate development. Policies controlling mineral development are set out in the Approved Structure Plan.
- 6.17 Non-residential (i.e. touring and static) caravan sites are considered in Structure Plan Policies R10 and R11, which state that such development should be located so as to minimise the adverse effect on the environment. Small scale proposals for touring caravans or tents, within the Green Belt, which do not involve the erection of significant, permanently sited ancillary buildings are unlikely to breach Green Belt objectives. Static (permanent) caravan pitches, however, constitute inappropriate development within the Green Belt and will be regarded as dwellings for the purposes of Policy 2.
- 6.18 Other appropriate uses may include development required in order to deliver essential public services - for example, construction or extension of sewage works and pumping stations - where these might, for operational reasons, need to be located in the Green Belt. Development for purposes other than those stated in Policy 2 will not normally be acceptable. Policies 4-7, however, identify circumstances in which the general rule established in Policy 2 can be relaxed - for example, dwellings within the built-up area of settlements and the re-use of redundant buildings.

#### POLICY 3

PROPOSALS FOR DEVELOPMENT WHICH IN PRINCIPLE 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 OF THE GREEN BELT OR PREJUDICE THE SPECIAL CHARACTER OF THE CITY.

#### Justification

- 6.19 Proposals may be made for types of development which are acceptable in principle in the Green Belt, but whose scale, location or design may impair the open character of the Green Belt or adversely affect the special character of the historic City.
- 6.20 In such circumstances, it would be appropriate for local planning authorities to resist development. This reflects PPG2 which states that the visual amenities of the Green Belt should not be injured by proposals for development within, or conspicuous from, the Green Belt which, although not prejudicial to its main purpose, might be inappropriate by reason of siting, materials or design.

#### POLICY 4

IN SETTLEMENTS WITHIN THE GREEN BELT, PLANNING PERMISSION FOR THE ERECTION OF NEW BUILDINGS OR THE CHANGE OF USE, REDEVELOPMENT OR EXTENSION OF EXISTING BUILDINGS WILL NORMALLY BE PERMITTED PROVIDED THAT:-

- (i) THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT IS LOCATED WITHIN THE BUILT-UP AREA OF THE SETTLEMENT; AND
- ii) THE SITING, SCALE AND DESIGN OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT IS APPROPRIATE TO THE FORM AND CHARACTER OF THE SETTLEMENT AND NEIGHBOURING PROPERTY.

#### Justification

- 6.21 Structure Plan Policy E10 states that the expansion of settlements in the Green Belt will not, normally, be permitted apart from minor infilling. Policy 4 modifies this approach to allow more flexibility in considering proposals. This is considered to be consistent with the objectives of the Green Belt since it will enable Local Planning Authorities to protect those infill spaces within settlements which contribute to the character of the area.

- 6.22 Not all small gaps are appropriate for infilling. Part of the character of many villages is made up of gardens, paddocks and other breaks between buildings. Infill development may also not be desirable if it would consolidate groups of houses which are isolated from the main body of a village, or consolidate a ribbon of development extending into the open countryside. In some villages little or no infill development may be appropriate; in others a limited amount of infill on selected sites may be acceptable.
- 6.23 Since the attractive character of the villages within the Green Belt is largely due to their existing buildings, it is important that new uses be found for them if they become redundant or disused. Replacement or extension of buildings in villages is also acceptable, provided that no significant harm is done to the environment.
- 6.24 Because of the importance of safeguarding the open character of the Green Belt, proposals for the change of use, replacement, or extension of existing buildings are more acceptable in villages than in the countryside.

#### POLICY 5

OUTSIDE SETTLEMENTS THERE WILL BE A PRESUMPTION AGAINST THE CHANGE OF USE, REDEVELOPMENT, OR SUBSTANTIAL EXTENSION OF EXISTING BUILDINGS EXCEPT FOR PROPOSALS WHICH ARE:-

- (i) APPROPRIATE DEVELOPMENT IN THE GREEN BELT AS DEFINED IN POLICY 2; OR
- (ii) NECESSARY FOR THE RETENTION OF BUILDINGS REGARDED BY THE LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY AS BEING OF ARCHITECTURAL MERIT OR HISTORIC INTEREST AND WHICH MAINTAIN THE CHARACTER OF THE BUILDING CONCERNED.

ADDITIONALLY PLANNING PERMISSION MAY BE GRANTED FOR THE CONVERSION OF REDUNDANT BUILDINGS TO SUITABLE NEW USES.

#### Justification

- 6.25 The overriding need to protect the open character of the Green Belt means that proposals for the change of use, redevelopment or substantial extension of existing buildings outside villages will not normally be acceptable. Such proposals, however, may be acceptable where they are necessary for the retention of buildings which are of value because of their individual architectural or historic worth or because of their strong contribution to the local scene.
- 6.26 In addition, rural areas contain a considerable number of agricultural buildings. Where these buildings are no longer required, consideration may be given to their re-use for other purposes which help to diversify the rural economy. This reflects Government guidance as set out in PPG2 and PPG7.

#### POLICY 6

THE CONVERSION OR RE-USE OF REDUNDANT HOSPITALS IN THE GREEN BELT FOR THOSE USES SPECIFIED IN POLICY 2 WILL NORMALLY BE PERMITTED. WHERE IT CAN BE DEMONSTRATED THAT NO APPROPRIATE GREEN BELT USE CAN BE FOUND, CONVERSION OR RE-USE FOR ALTERNATIVE USES MAY BE PERMITTED. WHERE IT CAN BE DEMONSTRATED THAT THE REDUNDANT HOSPITAL BUILDINGS ARE UNSUITABLE FOR CONVERSION, OR WHERE NO SUITABLE ALTERNATIVE USE CAN BE FOUND, REDEVELOPMENT MAY BE ACCEPTABLE PROVIDED THAT:

- (i) PROPOSALS FOR DEVELOPMENT DO NOT OCCUPY A LARGER AREA OF THE SITE NOR EXCEED THE HEIGHT OF THE EXISTING BUILDINGS; AND
- (ii) THE LOCATION OF ANY NEW BUILDINGS PAYS DUE REGARD TO THE LANDSCAPE AND THE NEED TO INTEGRATE THE NEW DEVELOPMENT WITH ITS SURROUNDINGS AND DOES NOT PREJUDICE THE OBJECTIVES OF THE GREEN BELT; AND

- (iii) THE VISUAL AMENITY OF THE GREEN BELT IS RETAINED OR ENHANCED BY THE USE OF APPROPRIATE MATERIALS AND CAREFUL SITING AND DESIGN OF DEVELOPMENT, WHERE PRACTICABLE, ENHANCEMENT AND PRESERVATION OF LANDSCAPED AND OPEN AREAS SHOULD BE INCLUDED WITH ADEQUATE PROVISION MADE, WHERE POSSIBLE, FOR PUBLIC ACCESS TO AND MAINTENANCE OF THESE AREAS; AND
- (iv) THE PROPOSALS DO NOT INVOLVE ADDITIONAL EXPENDITURE BY THE PUBLIC SECTOR ON THE PROVISION OF INFRASTRUCTURE, OR THE UNSATISFACTORY OVERLOADING OF LOCAL FACILITIES SUCH AS SCHOOLS.

**Justification**

- 6.27 Government guidance on planning for the future of redundant hospital buildings and their sites in the Green Belt is set out in PPG2. The overall aim is to ensure that any re-use of a site has no greater, and preferably less, impact on the Green Belt than the present use.
- 6.28 The guidelines therefore set out a series of options, in order of preference, for the re-use of such sites. The first option is for the existing buildings to be retained for a Green Belt purpose, such as a different institutional use. If, by reason of the size, form, layout and condition of the existing buildings and site, this is not practicable, the second option, conversion of the existing buildings for another use, can be considered. If this, too, is not practicable, the final option is redevelopment of the site. This is based on the principle that redundant hospital sites should be put to beneficial use rather than allowing the buildings to remain empty and the site to become derelict.
- 6.29 When the third option is considered, in accordance with the criteria in Policy 6, it will be important to take account of the overall aim of maintaining the site's contribution to the Green Belt. In particular, it will be important to protect those areas of open land which extend into the urban area from the open countryside and which represent a major element in safeguarding the special character of the historic City.
- 6.30 In accordance with the provisions of PPG2 and Policy 6, there are no proposals to remove the Clifton Hospital site, which is due to become redundant in 1996, from the York Green Belt. The Regional Health Authority has unsuccessfully marketed the Hospital site for appropriate Green Belt uses and the stage has been reached whereby the core area can be re-used or redeveloped for non-Green Belt uses, subject to the criteria in Policy 6 being satisfied.
- 6.31 The other redundant hospital site in the Green Belt - the site of the former Fulford and Naburn Hospitals - is subject to an unimplemented planning permission involving redevelopment and has been inset in the Green Belt.

**POLICY 7**

WITHIN THE GREEN BELT, PROPOSALS FOR "PARK AND RIDE" SITES WILL NOT NORMALLY BE PERMITTED. WHERE NO APPROPRIATE SITE CAN BE PROVIDED OUTSIDE THE GREEN BELT, PROPOSALS MAY BE ACCEPTABLE, PROVIDED THAT THE SITE

- (i) IS WELL RELATED TO THE YORK OUTER RING ROAD (A64/A1237); AND
- (ii) DOES NOT DETRACT FROM THE OPEN CHARACTER OF THE GREEN BELT; AND
- (iii) DOES NOT PREJUDICE THE GREEN BELT FUNCTION OF THOSE OPEN SPACES WHICH EXTEND FROM THE OPEN COUNTRYSIDE INTO URBAN AREAS; AND
- (iv) MINIMISES THE VISUAL IMPACT ON THE GREEN BELT; AND
- (v) DOES NOT CREATE ADDITIONAL DEVELOPMENT PRESSURE ON ADJACENT LAND WITHIN THE GREEN BELT.

**Justification**

- 6.32 One of the primary objectives of the Green Belt around York is to preserve the special character of this historic City. The main result of including land in the Green Belt is to maintain its open character thereby preventing the

merging of built-up areas and restricting their expansion. In this way, the primary objective above will be served. It is, however, acknowledged that other measures will also be required if the historic core is to be preserved. Increasing volumes of traffic, are likely to adversely affect the preservation of the historic centre. The City Council is actively pursuing a policy of provision of "park and ride" sites in an attempt to address this problem. (A substantial park and ride facility was opened on Tadcaster Road in Autumn 1990).

- 6.33 In order to function effectively, "park and ride" facilities need to be located on or close to the major radial routes and are likely to be close to junctions with the Outer Ring Road (A64/A1237). Although they must obviously be well signposted, they do not need of necessity to be highly visible.
- 6.34 Wherever possible, "park and ride" sites should not be sited in the Green Belt and should be developed in conjunction with, or in close proximity to, other development proposals as these arise. Where it is not possible to identify a non-Green Belt site, the criteria in Policy 7 will need to be satisfied.
- 6.35 These criteria seek to minimise the impact of "park and ride" sites on both the functions and the visual amenity of the Green Belt. In particular, it is important that "park and ride" sites do not prejudice the green wedges which extend into the urban area. It would be inappropriate if the implementation of schemes designed to assist in preserving the character of the City by reducing traffic was to be achieved at the expense of other aspects of the City's special character.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

# COMPLEMENTARY PROPOSALS IN THE GREEN BELT

### Introduction

- 7.1 The policies in Chapter 6 are concerned with the control of development in the Green Belt and the need to ensure that the Green Belt remains essentially open in character. Green Belt designation is not intended specifically to protect high quality agricultural land or areas of attractive landscape. Such factors are not material considerations in the designation or continued protection of Green Belts. These and other aspects are covered by separate planning policies set out in the County Structure Plan and developed further in other Local Plans covering the Green Belt.
- 7.2 It is essential, nevertheless, that land within the Green Belt has a positive use, otherwise there is the very real danger that land will fall into disuse or become derelict and be subject, particularly near the edge of towns and villages, to proposals for development of an urban character. There is also a need to maintain and, where necessary, improve the visual quality of the environment within the Green Belt. This can be done, for example, by the removal of eyesores, the restoration of derelict or disused land to a suitable use, and by amenity tree planting.

### Government Guidance

- 7.3 Government advice in Circular 14/84 is that Local Planning Authorities can assist in improving and enhancing the countryside environment within the Green Belt by working together with landowners, farmers and voluntary groups. The Circular goes on to state that once detailed Green Belt boundaries have become fixed they should not be amended, or development allowed, merely because the land has become derelict.
- 7.4 More recently, however, PPG2 has indicated that Green Belts have a positive role in providing access to the open countryside for the urban population. Such access may be for active outdoor sports or for passive recreation. Nevertheless, the inclusion of land in a Green Belt does not give the public any rights of access which they would not otherwise enjoy.

### The Greater York Countryside Management Project

- 7.5 In the Greater York area, the County and District Councils established the Greater York Countryside Management Project in December 1988. The project is also supported by the Countryside Commission. The need for such a management project grew out of the development of the York area in the late 1980's, when major areas of land on the periphery of the built-up area were released for development. The planning authorities recognised the need to try and integrate this expansion with more active conservation of the landscape and the wildlife habitats within it. They also recognised the need to improve public access to and enjoyment of both the open spaces within and the countryside around the City.
- 7.6 Countryside management essentially involves the resolution of landuse problems and user conflicts, the balancing of different interests and the opening up of new opportunities. The prime objective of the Greater York Countryside Management Project is, therefore, to enhance the environment of York and the surrounding rural area, much of which lies within the Green Belt, for the benefit of local residents and visitors and to improve opportunities for enjoying the countryside. Several schemes are already being implemented in the City and the surrounding rural area and more are likely to be identified.

## Other Measures

- 7.7 Policies and proposals on recreation and landscape matters will, if carried out with proper care and management, complement the designation and aims of the Green Belt.
- 7.8 Bodies such as the Countryside Commission provide grant-aid and advice both to the public and private sectors for a range of recreational and amenity schemes. Financial and other assistance may also be available from other bodies, for example, for environmental improvement and tree planting.
- 7.9 Tree and hedge planting to replace existing woodlands, coppices or hedgerows, and new planting, will substantially improve the visual quality of the countryside in the Green Belt. Long-term landscaping schemes involving tree and hedge planting may be undertaken in the confidence that urban encroachment is unlikely to take place for a considerable period of time, if at all. Particularly, where the Green Belt is narrow, tree planting to screen development may help to create the illusion of space.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND REVIEW

#### Implementation

- 8.1 The policies to control development within the Green Belt will chiefly be implemented by the five District Councils - Hambleton, Harrogate, Ryedale, Selby and York.

#### Monitoring

- 8.2 The York Green Belt Local Plan will be monitored in order to establish:-
- (i) how far its provisions are being implemented; and
  - (ii) whether the policies need to be modified or reviewed.

Monitoring will also help to ensure that the Local Plan policies are implemented on a consistent basis throughout the Green Belt. The effect of Green Belt policies on pressures for development outside the Green Belt will also be monitored.

#### Review

- 8.3 Government guidance indicates that the essential characteristic of Green Belts is their permanence and that it is necessary to establish boundaries which will endure. It follows therefore that Green Belt boundaries will only be altered in exceptional circumstances.
- 8.4 Adjustments to the approved Green Belt boundaries will at any time require strong justification and will need to avoid undermining the specific objectives sought through designation of the Green Belt.

## **NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY STRUCTURE PLAN GREEN BELT POLICIES**

### **POLICY E8**

THE NORTH YORKSHIRE GREEN BELTS WILL CONSIST OF:

- (i) A BAND FROM 1 TO 5 MILES ALONG THE COUNTY'S SOUTHERN BOUNDARY, FROM THE BOUNDARY OF THE YORKSHIRE DALES NATIONAL PARK TO WEST OF WETHERBY;
- (ii) A STRIP BETWEEN HARROGATE AND KNARESBOROUGH;
- (iii) A BAND SOME 4 MILES WIDE ALONG THE WESTERN BOUNDARY OF SELBY DISTRICT, FROM WEST OF TADCASTER TO THE BOUNDARY WITH SOUTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY.

THESE GREEN BELTS WILL BROADLY INCLUDE THOSE AREAS PREVIOUSLY APPROVED BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE AS GREEN BELT (SOME ON AN INTERIM BASIS) WITH THE ADDITION OF A SMALL AREA SOUTH OF BALNE MOOR:

- (iv) A BELT WHOSE OUTER EDGE IS ABOUT 6 MILES FROM YORK CITY CENTRE.

### **POLICY E8a**

IN DEFINING THE PRECISE BOUNDARIES OF THE GREEN BELT IN LOCAL PLANS, ACCOUNT WILL BE TAKEN OF:

- (i) THE NEED TO REGULATE THE SIZE AND SHAPE OF URBAN AREAS IN ORDER TO PREVENT UNCONTROLLED GROWTH;
- (ii) THE NEED TO PREVENT THE COALESCENCE OF EXISTING SETTLEMENTS;
- (iii) THE NEED TO PRESERVE AREAS OF OPEN LAND EXTENDING INTO THE URBAN AREA FROM THE COUNTRYSIDE WHICH HAVE AN EXISTING OR POTENTIAL RECREATIONAL OR AMENITY VALUE;
- (iv) THE NEED TO PRESERVE EASY ACCESS TO OPEN COUNTRY AND OUTDOOR RECREATION IN PLEASANT SURROUNDINGS.

### **POLICY E9**

PLANNING PERMISSION WITHIN GREEN BELT AREAS WILL NORMALLY BE GRANTED ONLY FOR THE ERECTION OF NEW BUILDINGS, OR THE CHANGE OF USE OR REDEVELOPMENT OF EXISTING BUILDINGS WHICH ARE NECESSARY IN CONNECTION WITH THE FOLLOWING LAND USES:-

- (i) AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY;
- (ii) OUTDOOR SPORT AND RECREATION;
- (iii) CEMETERIES OR INSTITUTIONS STANDING IN EXTENSIVE GROUNDS; AND
- (iv) OTHER USES APPROPRIATE IN A RURAL AREA.

**POLICY E10**

THE EXPANSION OF SETTLEMENTS WITHIN THE GREEN BELTS, APART FROM MINOR INFILLING, WILL NOT NORMALLY BE PERMITTED. WHERE A NEED FOR EXPANSION CAN BE ESTABLISHED, THE SETTLEMENT WILL BE EXCLUDED FROM THE GREEN BELT AND THE PRECISE BOUNDARY OF THE EXTENDED SETTLEMENT DEFINED IN A LOCAL PLAN WHEN THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA WILL NEED TO BE SATISFIED:—

- (i) THE DEVELOPMENT PROPOSED IS OF AN APPROPRIATE SCALE AND TYPE; AND
- (ii) THE PUBLIC UTILITIES HAVE SUFFICIENT SPARE CAPACITY; AND
- (iii) ADEQUATE SHOPS AND PRIMARY EDUCATION FACILITIES ARE AVAILABLE.

## DETAILED CRITERIA FOR DEFINING THE GREEN BELT BOUNDARY

In order to ensure a consistent approach to defining Green Belt boundaries over such a large and complex area as Greater York, certain "ground-rules" have been followed. In particular, the boundary follows recognisable physical features wherever possible, and so:-

- (i) where the boundary follows a railway line, the permanent way itself is the feature used;
- (ii) on roads, lanes, bridleways and footpaths, the boundary is normally the Green Belt side of the route.

Along the edge of the Green Belt, where difficult decisions are frequently involved, further guidelines governed the drawing of the boundary. In summary:-

- (i) house gardens have normally been excluded;
- (ii) parks and sports grounds have normally been included;
- (iii) in most cases primary schools have been excluded, and secondary schools - with their more extensive provision of playing fields - generally included;
- (iv) areas with a valid planning permission for built development have been excluded;
- (v) "ribbon" development, where it is inside, or extends into, land with Green Belt quality, has normally been included;
- (vi) allotments, chicken-runs, garden centres, nurseries and sewage works have generally been included; and
- (vii) garages, isolated industry, tips, reclamation sites, church yards and land allocations in inherited plans, have been individually assessed on their merits.

# ANNEXE III iv

YGBLP – POSITION PAPER

NYCC

# YORK GREEN BELT LOCAL PLAN

PUBLIC LOCAL PLAN INQUIRY

## Position Statement

4. WHAT STATUS SHOULD BE GIVEN TO THE GREATER YORK STUDY OR TO ALTERATION No.3 TO THE STRUCTURE PLAN?

John D. Rennison,  
MA, MSc, MRTPL, ARICS, MBIM,  
Chartered Town Planner,  
COUNTY PLANNING OFFICER,  
NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL.



WHAT STATUS SHOULD BE GIVEN TO THE GREATER YORK STUDY  
OR TO ALTERATION No 3 TO THE STRUCTURE PLAN?

1. GREATER YORK STUDY
- 1.1 The 'Greater York Study : A Strategy to 2006' is a non-statutory planning document prepared and agreed jointly by the six Greater York Authorities - North Yorkshire County Council and Hambleton, Harrogate, Ryedale, Selby and York District Councils - and published in February 1991. The document seeks to provide a more detailed framework for the preparation of local plans and the definition of the York Green Belt than is provided by the approved Structure Plan, in circumstances where responsibility for local plan preparation is divided between five District Councils.
- 1.2 The Greater York Study is not a new innovation. It constitutes a review of the previous joint policies document 'Policies for Housing and Industrial Land in the Greater York Area', published jointly by the six Authorities in 1982 (Document A20). This document had been specifically requested by the Secretary of State for the Environment when approving the Structure Plan in 1980 (Document A3) and was subsequently informally endorsed by him in 1984 (Appendix 1).
- 1.3 The local authorities have long recognised the need to co-ordinate development in Greater York. This was recognised as far back as the early 1960's when the local planning authorities were advised by central government to prepare a comprehensive study of long term land needs before further consideration could be given to Green Belt proposals. The need for a more comprehensive approach to development in Greater York was confirmed by the Secretary of State in 1987 when he approved a specific Greater York dimension in Alteration No 1 to the Structure Plan, providing for the first time a statutory level of provision for housing and employment for the period to 1996.
- 1.4 The relationship between the Greater York Study, the Green Belt Local Plan and Alteration No 3 to the Structure Plan has been consistently recognised by the County Council throughout the preparation of these documents. The Greater York Study noted (para 81) that an Alteration to the Structure Plan would be necessary to accommodate the principle of a new settlement and that the County Council had put this work in hand as a matter of priority. This reflected the 1996 end-date of the existing Structure Plan and the need to ensure that subsequent local plans based on the agreed strategy were in general conformity with the Structure Plan. The Study also referred (para 82) to the need to define Green Belt boundaries in the Green Belt Local Plan. In line with this approach Alteration No 3, which incorporates a policy for a new settlement to meet part of the longer term development requirements arising from within Greater York, has been approved by the County Council for placing on deposit prior to this Public Local Inquiry, while the Green Belt Local Plan fully reflects the agreed strategy.
- 1.5 That it is appropriate to base the Green Belt Local Plan and proposed Alterations on a non-statutory joint study has been accepted by the Secretary of State for the Environment in both the Department of the Environment's response to public consultation on the Greater York Study

and to public consultation on the Green Belt Local Plan Draft. With regard to the Greater York Study (Appendix 2) the Department had no substantive comments but identified the two critical next steps as being the preparation of the Green Belt Local Plan and Alteration No 3 to the Structure Plan. In its response to the Green Belt Local Plan Draft the Department indicated that "if at all possible it would be prudent to achieve formal submission of the Alteration before the Green Belt Local Plan proceeds to local inquiry" (Appendix 3). This will enable the proposals to be justified in the context of the emerging Structure Plan. It will, of course, be noted that it is anticipated that the Alteration will have been placed on deposit (equivalent to formal submission to the Secretary of State under the new procedures) prior to the opening of this Public Local Inquiry.

1.6 The County Council therefore notes that:

- i) although the Greater York Study is a non-statutory planning document, its preparation has been requested and encouraged by the Secretary of State as the basis for local plan preparation in the area;
- ii) the Study was prepared and published jointly by the six Greater York Authorities and its conclusions adopted by all the authorities;
- iii) the Study has been subject to public consultation and subsequent amendment;
- iv) the Secretary of State has acknowledged that the Study is an appropriate prelude to the preparation of the Green Belt Local Plan;
- v) in the situation where responsibility for local plan preparation is divided between 5 District Councils the preparation of a joint, non-statutory planning strategy represents the only practical approach to finally defining the York Green Belt boundary - a co-ordinated approach for which the Secretary of State has been pressing for over 30 years.

1.7 In these circumstances the County Council concludes that the Greater York Study is an important material consideration to which due weight needs to be given in considering the Green Belt Local Plan.

## 2. ALTERATION NO 3 TO THE NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY STRUCTURE PLAN

2.1 The County Council anticipates that Alteration No 3 to the Structure Plan will be placed on deposit prior to the Public Local Inquiry. This follows a period of public consultation on draft proposals in February and March 1992 and subsequent amendment of the Plan. In accordance with statutory requirements Alteration No 3 will remain on deposit for 6 weeks, to enable objections and other representations to be lodged. The County Council will then consider these views and, if necessary, make further amendments. Finally an Examination in Public will be held during 1993 when unresolved objections will be considered by a panel appointed by the Secretary of State.

- 2.2 Alteration No 3 updates the strategic framework for development and change in North Yorkshire as a whole to 2006 and addresses the development needs of Greater York, previously identified in the Greater York Study, within the statutory development plan system.
- 2.3 Of specific relevance to the Green Belt Local Plan are Policies H1 and I5, which roll forward housing and employment land requirements to 2006 within the overall approved strategy of restraint and, more particularly, Policy H2. This makes provision for a new settlement of 800-1,000 dwellings beyond the outer boundary of the Green Belt to help meet the needs of Greater York in the period to 2006.
- 2.4 As noted in para 2.1, Alteration No 3 has been published in draft form, subject to public consultation and amendment and is now to be placed on deposit. As an emerging Alteration to the Structure Plan the County Council considers that considerable weight should be attached to its provisions, particularly insofar as they relate to the new settlement strategy.
- 2.5 Guidance on the weight to be attached to emerging development plans which are going through the statutory procedure towards adoption is set out in the recently revised PPG1 (para 32). This states that the weight depends upon two factors:-
- i) the stage of preparation, with the weight increasing as successive stages are reached; and
  - ii) the degree of conflict with the existing plans.
- 2.6 In this instance the County Council notes that:-
- i) Alteration No 3 is now to be placed on deposit, having been prepared as a draft consultation document, subject to public consultation and amended after public consultation;
  - ii) there is no conflict between the proposed Alteration and the approved Structure Plan. Alteration No 3 updates the strategic framework provided by the approved Plan, but does not seek to change either the strategy, the priorities or the majority of the policies. Policy H2 of the Alteration makes provision for a new settlement beyond the outer boundary of the York Green Belt. This represents a departure from past planning practice, but since the proposal is specifically identified for the period after 1996 and since the approved Structure Plan settlement policies only relate to the period up to 1996, the County Council does not consider that the two plans are in conflict.
- 2.7 The County Council also notes the provisions of the recently issued PPG12 which provides further guidance on the status of Structure Plan reviews in relation to local plan preparation.
- 2.8 Paragraph 4.14 of PPG12 notes that, where the Structure Plan is being reviewed, it may not be sensible to complete local plans in conformity with the existing Structure Plan and that, where proposals to alter or replace a Structure Plan have been placed on deposit but have not yet been adopted, the assumption may be made for all purposes of plan preparation that these Structure Plan proposals have been adopted. Paragraph 4.15 indicates that

this procedure should only be used where the Structure Plan proposals are in line with national and regional planning guidance and where the main targets in the Structure Plan proposals for the area of the local plan are not subject to significant objections.

2.9 The County Council notes that there is currently no regional planning guidance for Yorkshire and Humberside. The Alterations are considered to be in line with national policy guidance, particularly that in revised PPG3 relating to new settlements. This states (para 33) that the Secretary of State takes the view that a proposal for such a settlement should only be contemplated where:

- the alternative of expansion of existing towns or villages would represent a less satisfactory method of providing land for the new housing that is needed;
- the proposal is a clear expression of local preference supported by local planning authorities;
- the proposal can be considered alongside policies of restraint to protect the rejected alternative locations from development pressures; and
- it is not within a Green Belt.

The County Council considers that all these criteria have been fully met in the Greater York proposal.

2.10 With regard to 'significant objections' the County Council notes that a range of representations were received to the proposals in the Consultation Draft of Alteration No 3, including a number of objections. This is in the nature of any public consultation exercise on draft proposals.

2.11 Notwithstanding these objections, the County Council believes that the guidance in PPG12 clearly suggests that considerable weight should now be given to the proposals and strategy contained in Alteration No. 3.

### 3. CONCLUSION

3.1 In a situation where planning responsibilities are divided between so many authorities, there is clearly a need to provide guidance for individual local plan preparation and development control decisions, which goes beyond the confines of District boundaries. This has been consistently recognised by the Secretary of State who has encouraged and supported the preparation of a non-statutory framework for development in Greater York. The Secretary of State has also accepted that the definition of the detailed Green Belt boundaries requires the Greater York context to be established in such a Study. The weight to be attached to the Greater York Study should be assessed accordingly.

3.2 Alteration No 3 to the Structure Plan should be on deposit prior to the Public Local Inquiry. In accordance with national policy advice considerable weight should be attached to this document.



From the  
Regional Director

Departments of the Environment and Transport  
~~Department of the Environment~~  
Yorkshire and Humberside Region  
City House Leeds LS1 4JD  
Telephone 0532 38232 ext.300

23 March 1984

H J Evans Esq BA LMRTPI  
Chief Executive  
North Yorkshire County Council  
County Hall  
NORTHALLERTON  
DL7 8AD

Yorkshire County Council	
Local Executive's Dept.	
Rec'd.	26 MAR 1984
Ack'd.	.....
Ans'd.	.....

Dear Sir

POLICIES FOR HOUSING AND INDUSTRIAL LAND IN THE GREATER YORK AREA

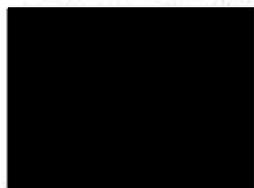
1. I must thank you and your consultees, principally the districts of Hambleton, Harrogate, Ryedale, Selby and York, and the Yorkshire Water Authority, for carrying out this study required by the Secretary of State in his decision on the North Yorkshire Structure Plan, namely that you should consider further the location of future development in the York area to produce firm proposals for the location of future housing and industrial development in the area.
2. I know that you are now making progress on a proposed Alteration to the Structure Plan, and that some of the district councils are currently preparing local plans for parts of the Greater York area, and I apologise for the delay in responding to your study. As you know, however, we have consulted other Government Departments; and I am sure that you will have appreciated the importance which we have had to attach to ensuring that other statutory procedures are in no way prejudiced. I have in mind, for example, the Compulsory Purchase Order for the York Outer Ring Road; and the 'departure' case at Pigeon Cote Farm, the development of which was not envisaged in the study.
3. As you appreciate, the Secretary of State is unable to respond formally to the report which cannot be regarded as falling within the definition of a statutory development plan. I must stress too that our comments on the study are entirely without prejudice to the content of local plans or to the outcome of statutory procedures for their adoption, or to public rights of objection to them. Subject to these qualifications, and although the general proposals cannot exclude the possibility of development in other locations, or necessarily presume in favour of those which you have indicated, I can endorse the broad thrust of the report: we recognise the weight of the planning case put forward and commend the way in which you have considered and balanced the factors relative to the policies you propose. Furthermore, we are aware that the old style development plans for the York area are both dated and statutorily incomplete, and therefore we welcome the production of the report

as a valuable co-ordinating exercise which builds on the Structure Plan policies and should assist in the preparation of local plans by the relevant local planning authorities. In preparing their local plans, and in considering the Alteration to the Structure Plan, we would encourage the local authorities concerned to maintain their liaison in looking at the problems of development in the Greater York area to ensure the co-ordination of public investment decisions and so enable the future development of the area to take place in an orderly and well planned manner.

4. You will be pleased to know that your proposals have brought no adverse comments from MAFF, Department of Industry or Department of Employment.

5. Please let me know if you would like to discuss the study further or our response to it.

Yours faithfully

A solid black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of R J Green.

R J GREEN



**Departments of the Environment and Transport**

*Yorkshire and Humberside Regional Office*

City House Leeds LS1 4JD

Telex 55472

Telephone 0532 438232 ext

Ext 2270

Mr J D Rennilson  
County Planning Officer  
North Yorkshire County Council  
NORTHALLERTON  
North Yorkshire  
DL7 8AQ

Your ref: PFD/MAF

5 April 1990

Dear Mr Rennilson

**GREATER YORK: LONG TERM DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY  
AND GREATER YORK SHOPPING POLICIES**

Thank you for your letter of 2 March 1990, which enclosed copies of the above reports. As you requested we have passed these on to other, relevant, Government Departments, who no doubt will send any comments directly to you.

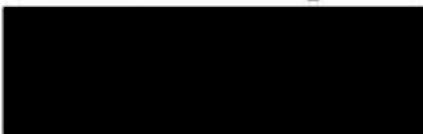
We think the documents put over the issues in a clear, easily understandable format, which I am sure will be of use to all parties responding. It is also pleasing to see the degree of co-operation existing amongst the Greater York authorities.

At present we have no substantive comments as such to make on the documents other than to encourage progress and to be kept in touch. As indicated in the documents, two critical "next steps" will be the production of the Green Belt Subject Plan and an alteration to your Structure Plan. Obviously as the Secretary of State has a statutory role in the approval of these plans I am sure you will appreciate that we have to be careful not to pre-judge the merits of the various options prior to their formal consideration. Nevertheless we think the documents are a constructive means to raise the issues for public debate.

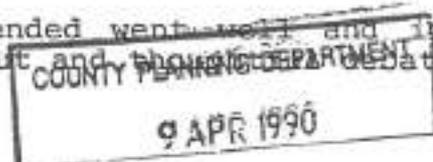
I look forward to hearing about the results of this exercise along with your work on the development plans. If you think a meeting would be helpful please let us know.

I thought the public meeting I attended went well and it was encouraging to see such a large turnout and thoughtful debate.

Yours sincerely



MISS M Q REES  
Regional Superintending Planner





Departments of the Environment ~~and Transport~~

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J D Rennilson Esq  
 County Planning Officer  
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 Race Course Lane  
 NORTHALLERTON  
 North Yorkshire  
 DL7 8AQ

22 May 1991

Dear Mr Rennilson

**DRAFT YORK GREEN BELT LOCAL PLAN**

1. I refer to your letter dated 6 February 1991, enclosing copies of the above draft plan, and to your subsequent letter extending the consultation period to 19 April. As requested copies of the plan were circulated to other Government Departments, and I note that you have already received responses from the Department of Transport and the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. We have not received any other responses.

2. We found the continual dialogue most useful in highlighting the procedural problems affecting this plan, the related structure plan Alteration, and the South Ryedale Local Plan. Arising from these meetings we can confirm that, on the basis of the present legislative timetable, you should aim to deposit the green belt local plan by the end of this year to avoid possible difficulties with the transitional arrangements contained in the Planning and Compensation Bill. Similar considerations affect the South Ryedale Local Plan but, following consultations with headquarters colleagues and our recent meeting with your officers and those of Ryedale, we feel that the timescale of that plan needs to be brought into line with the approved structure plan before it can be certified. Alternatively, you may wish to consider the feasibility of a certificate which makes reference to the pending Alteration: we would be willing to sound out our lawyers on the format of such a certificate if you think that would be helpful. The timetable for the Alteration has slipped somewhat since we discussed it with you early in 1990: we recognise the resource constraints which account for this slippage, but urge you to make every effort to retrieve the situation. We think if at all possible it would be prudent to achieve formal submission of the Alteration before the green belt LP proceeds to local inquiry.

3. We have noted the apparent similarities between the green belt LP and a local plan in Wyre Forest district, which was the subject of a recent High Court judgment. As you know, we are not empowered to interpret either the statutes or judgments of the Courts and I must therefore refrain from commenting on the judgment. On the general question of the power under which the green belt plan is being prepared, however, I would say that your approved structure plan includes authority for a green belt "whose outer edge is about 6 miles from York city centre": within this broad parameter we believe you are free to define both inner and outer edges of the belt as you think fit. As to possible conflict between the green belt plan and other plans which contain green belt we would simply draw attention to regulation 45 of the 1982 Local Plans Regulations.

4. Concerning the merits of your draft proposals, I am sure you understand that we are constrained from commenting on individual sites by the Secretary of State's formal role, which he may be called upon to exercise in the latter stages of the plan prior to its adoption. You know, however, that the Department attaches great importance to the formal definition of the York green belt for the first time, after many years of operation on an informal basis. As you know we have brought together the 6 authorities in order to facilitate the preparation of the plan, and have intervened to prevent inappropriate development taking place while the green belt was being defined. We shall continue to monitor development applications in the Greater York area very carefully, and will take action if appropriate. Where decisions have already been made by the Secretary of State or his inspectors, we look to the 6 authorities to respect them while the process of definition is proceeding.

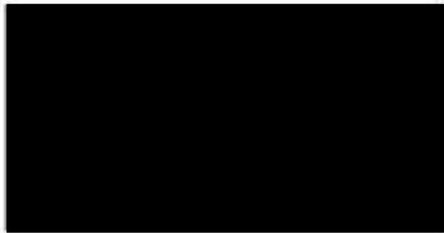
5. You are, of course, familiar with the 5 purposes of green belts, which are set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 2, paragraph 4. The third and last of those purposes are perhaps of only limited relevance to the York green belt, but the other three are clearly of some significance, and we regard the fourth purpose - to preserve the special character of historic towns - as being particularly relevant to York. This purpose was highlighted in the Department's publication 'The Green Belts', which was re-issued in 1988 and mentioned in the introduction to your plan.

6. If I may make one general comment about your proposals, without prejudice to any formal decisions which the Secretary of State may be called on to make, it is to reiterate our earlier comments about the apparent 'tightness' of the inner boundaries you have proposed. In some areas in West and South Yorkshire expansion has shown there to be quite frequent conflict between a tightly-drawn green belt and the wish to accommodate previously unforeseen development pressure, suggesting the importance of allowing a reasonable amount of flexibility to ensure that the defined green belt can endure without undue erosion and consequent dilution of the green belt principle.

7. In the case of Greater York we understand that your proposals are based on a strategy which quite intentionally aims to keep the extent of the built-up areas at about their present limits, making provision for major development beyond the outer edge of the green belt. While making no judgment on this strategy, we would simply remind you that if you choose to proceed on these lines you will need to justify your proposals in the context of the emerging structure plan Alteration, hence our

reference to the need for formal submission prior to the local plan inquiry. Whatever the merits of the strategy you will, of course, need to maintain a 5 year supply of residential land at all times.

Yours sincerely



MISS M Q REES

# ANNEXE III v

YGBLP – PROOF OF EVIDENCE

INNER BOUNDARY

# YORK GREEN BELT LOCAL PLAN

## PUBLIC LOCAL PLAN INQUIRY

### Proof of Evidence

TOPIC AREA : A9 Inner Boundary

OBJECTION NO. : 122B, 839A, 916C, 966B, 976B, 996C,  
1021D, 1655C, 1852B

SUPPORT NO. : 1580A, 1887A

SUPPORT FOR THE BOUNDARIES IN GENERAL :  
378A, 475A, 894D, 926A, 1508A

SUPPORT FOR THE BOUNDARIES IN RYEDALE : 98

John D. Rennilson,  
MA, MSc, MRTPL, ARICS, MBIM,  
Chartered Town Planner,  
COUNTY PLANNING OFFICER,  
NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL.



## 1. REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

### Summary of Objections

- 1.1 Eight objections to the tightness of the inner boundary of the Green Belt have been lodged for the following reasons:-
- i) the limited amount of peripheral development which can be accommodated within the inner boundary is unrealistic and a departure from the agreed Greater York Study;
  - ii) areas of white land should be provided for between the edge of York and the inner boundary to meet the future land needs of the City as required by PPG2 and PPG12, including affordable housing needs;
  - iii) the Green Belt includes land not essential to the purposes of the Green Belt, contrary to DoE Circular 14/84;
  - iv) a tight inner boundary will increase house prices and the cost of development land generally;
  - v) a tight inner boundary will create pressure to develop on open spaces and increase the density of development.
- 1.2 All of these objectors have also lodged specific objections to the permanency of the boundaries (A8) and seven of the objectors consider that the Plan is premature as the new settlement strategy has not yet been approved (A7).
- 1.3 In addition a further objection (966B) has been lodged on the grounds that the inner boundary should be relaxed to relieve the pressure for a new settlement in rural areas, assist urban regeneration in West Yorkshire and avoid York being turned into a museum, while still protecting its historic character.
- 1.4 The other eight objectors are not against the principle of a new settlement, but are concerned that the boundaries of the Green Belt have been drawn before the development strategy for Greater York has been approved by the Secretary of State. Their objection is that, even with a new settlement(s), the inner boundary has been drawn so tightly that the future development needs of York will be restricted.

### Summary of Support

- 1.5 Two statements have been received supporting the inner boundary as defined, as a means of preventing further peripheral growth and affording protection to local communities, since a weakening of the inner boundary would undermine the new settlement strategy being promoted for Greater York.
- 1.6 Five statements have also been received generally supporting the boundaries of the Green Belt, together with a statement of support for the Green Belt boundaries in Ryedale District.

2. COUNTY COUNCIL'S RESPONSE

- 2.1 The issue of the 'tightness' of the inner boundary in the Green Belt Local Plan has been addressed in the County Council's Position Statement NY/9 in response to the question:-
- "how much undeveloped land should be left as 'white land' within the inner boundary and should some of it be identified as a strategic reserve".
- 2.2 In summary, the County Council considers that its proposals for the inner boundary of the Green Belt are well founded in the context of national policy guidance and the objectives sought by designation of a Green Belt around the historic City of York. The County Council also considers that it has made appropriate provision to meet the development needs of the City and the wider Greater York area and that its proposals for maintenance of a relatively tight inner boundary to the Green Belt around the edge of York will not therefore adversely impact on the future economic and social development of the City.
- 1) the limited amount of peripheral development which can be accommodated within the inner boundary is unrealistic and a departure from the agreed Greater York Study
- 2.3 The context for the scale of development land provision in the Greater York area is established in Alteration No 3 to the County Structure Plan which is now to be placed formally on deposit before the commencement of the Local Plan Inquiry. The proposals in Alteration No 3 draw on the conclusions of the Greater York Study : A Strategy to 2006, prepared by the six Greater York Authorities and published in February 1991. This non-statutory document assessed land requirements in the context of the provisions of the approved Structure Plan for the period to 1996 and, in general terms, by rolling forward the approved numeric policies for the Greater York area in the post-1996 period. It was noted in the Study however that the assessed requirement needed careful monitoring and would need to be comprehensively reviewed when revised population/household/workforce projections were available as part of the input to Alteration No 3.
- 2.4 The level of provision now proposed in Alteration No 3 represents a reduction in the level of housing provision in the Greater York Study, due to changing levels of household formation. It is in the nature of the planning process that the basis of policy decisions will be subject to review and change over time and inevitable, therefore, that the numeric guidance of the non-statutory Greater York Study and the contribution it anticipated from individual sites would be adjusted as a result of subsequent work on Alteration No 3, preparation of the Green Belt Local Plan and the Southern Ryedale Local Plan and the impact of both day to day development control decisions and appeals.

- 1i) Areas of white land should be provided for between the edge of York and the inner boundary to meet the future land needs of the City
- 2.5 As noted in Position Statement NY/9 the Greater York Authorities considered, as one of eight long term distributional options, the implications of continuing to meet most development land needs around the periphery of the existing built-up areas of the City and in the surrounding villages. They comprehensively rejected such a strategy primarily because it was not considered possible to identify the anticipated development land requirement without causing significant environmental damage and seriously compromising the objectives of the Green Belt.
- 2.6 In rejecting the principal of further peripheral urban expansion and in proposing the maintenance of a relatively tight inner Green Belt boundary the County Council considers it has taken fully into account national policy guidance, including that contained in Circular 14/84 and PPG2.
- 2.7 Position Statement NY/9 (paras 2.11 and 2.12) notes that Government advice in PPG2 recognises there will be circumstances where the identification of 'white land' between the urban area and the Green Belt will not be appropriate. The County Council's view is that the York Green Belt falls in this category and that the character and setting of York, which includes its relationship with the adjoining open countryside and the surrounding villages, has already been significantly eroded by major incremental peripheral growth of the urban area. The County Council contends therefore that if the principal objective of the York Green Belt is to be properly safeguarded, rigorous controls over further peripheral growth of the urban area will need to be imposed in the long term.
- 2.8 The County Council believes this is the most appropriate response in the context of the various pressures being exerted on the Greater York area. It is also satisfied that the priority afforded to environmental/green belt considerations will not prevent suitable provision being made for development land requirements. As noted in Position Statement NY/9, paras 2.5 and 2.6, while the balance of advantage is seen in the longer term as lying in the development of a new settlement, with only very limited further development on the periphery of the built-up area, in the period up to 2006 at least the majority of the land requirements will continue to be on identified, non-green belt sites in villages and on the periphery of the main urban area and on infill sites and 'windfall' sites within the urban area. In the longer term, all potential development options other than peripheral growth will need to be considered and evaluated.
- 1ii) The Green Belt includes land not essential to the purposes of the Green Belt contrary to Circular 14/84
- 2.9 The County Council does not agree with this assertion. In drawing up the boundaries the County Council has had regard for the provisions of national policy advice and has applied it when considering the contribution each particular area makes to the objectives and functions sought by Green Belt designation around an historic City like York. The Green Belt function of individual sites will necessarily be more evident and important in some

areas than in others. Nevertheless, the County Council believes that each piece of land it has included in the Green Belt contributes to the long term integrity of the Green Belt as a whole.

iv) A tight inner boundary will increase house prices and the cost of development land generally and will create pressure to develop on open spaces and increase the density of development

- 2.10 Several objectors have suggested that a tight inner boundary to the Green Belt will variously serve to push up house prices and the cost of development land generally, create pressure to develop on open spaces within the urban area, increase the density of development and, as a consequence, result in housing demands not being fully met.
- 2.11 The County Council notes that the recently revised PPG3 "Housing" refers to the need to provide an adequate and continuous supply of land for housing and to take account of market demand (para 1). The same paragraph, however, also emphasises that established environmental policies must be maintained and enhanced and clearly re-states the Government's firm commitment to the protection of Green Belts.
- 2.12 The Government's commitment to ensuring that environmental considerations are not jeopardised by market demand for development is also demonstrated in the Secretary of State's approval of Alteration No 1 to the North Yorkshire County Structure Plan. In his decision letter dated 14 January 1987 the Secretary of State endorsed the strategy of housing restraint adopted by the County Council and stated as follows:-

"the quality of the environment in North Yorkshire warrants some restraint of unfettered market demand for housing, particularly having regard to the guidance in paragraph 3 of DoE Circular 15/84 about the need to accommodate necessary development in ways that protect amenity, and about the Government's commitment to conservation policies. In this respect he notes that Structure Plan Policies A1, A3, E1 and E8 identify particular areas where protection, conservation and restraint are appropriate, and together have effect over large parts of the County" (para 5.6).

The Secretary of State also noted the EIP Panel's views that:-

"an over-generous provision (of land for housing) could result in damage to the environment and agriculture, and could increase the problems of neighbouring districts of West Yorkshire by attracting increased numbers of people from there to North Yorkshire and thereby hindering the regeneration of urban areas of West Yorkshire." (para 5.3)

- 2.13 At both national and County levels the Secretary of State has therefore clearly indicated that market demand does not represent a reasonable basis for determining either the scale or the distribution of development in isolation from other, wider policy considerations. The County Council agrees and considers that it would be wholly inappropriate, in the context of the important environmental considerations affecting the York area, that meeting market demand levels of development should be the determining factor in setting the boundaries of the York Green Belt. In this context the County Council notes the similarities between York and Chester and the

previous Secretary of State's decision not to approve proposals in the Cheshire Structure Plan to draw back the Chester Green Belt so as to release additional peripheral development land (See also NY/12, paras 2.15 and 2.16).

- 2.14 As already noted in paragraph 2.8 the County Council is satisfied that adequate provision is being made for the development land requirements of the Greater York area within the constraint imposed by the need to maintain a tight Green Belt around the City. The County Council is not seeking to meet all future (post-2006) development requirements in the proposed new settlement. There are other options, which will need to be investigated at the appropriate time. The only option ruled out in the longer term is further significant peripheral expansion around the existing urban area.
- 2.15 The County Council notes the views which have been expressed that the effect of tight Green Belt boundaries will be to create pressures for development of open spaces within the urban area, promote "town cramming" and increase development densities. Nevertheless it is not a function of the Green Belt Local Plan to exercise control over the use of land outside the Green Belt. This is a matter for the District Councils and there are alternative policy means available to ensure that important open spaces within the urban area remain open. Similarly, the District Councils have control over the density of development on individual sites.
- 2.16 While more intensive use of open spaces within the urban area can, depending upon individual circumstances, harm the character of an area, the County Council is not persuaded that the answer is in fact to release more land for development on green field sites and in areas which are, for different reasons, equally as sensitive in environmental terms and which serve Green Belt functions.
- 2.17 A further objector has suggested the inner boundary of the Green Belt should be relaxed in order to relieve pressure for a new settlement in rural areas, assist urban regeneration in West Yorkshire and avoid turning York into a museum. In relation to these points the County Council considers that:-
- the new settlement strategy was only adopted after lengthy and detailed consideration of alternative development options and their implications. The Greater York Authorities recognise that a new settlement will have an effect on the immediate rural area, but have concluded that, on balance, this represents the most appropriate and environmentally least damaging way forward.
  - relaxation of the inner boundary of the Green Belt will not necessarily assist urban regeneration in West Yorkshire. Indeed, excessive provision for housing in the Greater York area may stimulate development pressures generated from outside the County, including those from West Yorkshire, thus hindering regeneration in West Yorkshire.
  - the maintenance of a tight Green Belt will not turn York into a museum. It is aimed at protecting the City's historic character which would be jeopardised by further peripheral expansion.

- the historic character and the setting of York will be placed under increased threat by the relaxation of the inner boundary of the Green Belt in order to accommodate long term urban land requirements.

3. CONCLUSIONS

- 3.1 The County Council concludes that the Green Belt boundary it has established around the edge of the built-up area is fully justified and has been properly drawn and that, in defining the boundary, full account has been taken of Government guidance, the functions of the York Green Belt and the long term development requirements of the Greater York area. The County Council also notes that the policy of maintaining a relatively tight inner boundary to the Green Belt was widely endorsed following public consultation on the proposals in the Greater York Study.
- 3.2 The significant peripheral growth of the urban area of Greater York over the last three decades has left the County Council in no doubt that further such expansion would be environmentally unsound and would materially conflict with the objectives sought by the designation of a Green Belt around York.

# ANNEXE III vi

YGBLP INSPECTOR'S REPORT ON OBJECTIONS,  
1994

Note: The Front Sheet is numbered 567

The remaining pages of this Annexe III vi are referred to by their  
internal page numbers being 1 – 230.



TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

YORK GREEN BELT LOCAL PLAN

REPORT ON OBJECTIONS TO THE PLAN

Inspector: J R Sheppard BSc(Est Man) MPhil FRICS FRTPI

Assistant  
Inspector: H H Jones RIBA DipTP MRTPI

Dates of  
Inquiry: 15, 16, 18, 22, 23, 25, 30 September, 1, 6, 8, 10, 13-16, 20,  
22, 23 October, 10-12, 17, 19, 24-27 November, 1-3, 8, 9  
December 1992  
12, 19, 20, 27, 28 January, 3, 4, 9-11 February, 2-4, 9-11, 17,  
18, 23-26 March, 20-22, 27, 28 April 1993

# ANNEXE III viii

NYCSP ALTERATION 3  
FURTHER PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS  
1995

# ANNEXE III viii

NYCSP ALTERATION 3  
FURTHER PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS  
1995



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# **NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY STRUCTURE PLAN**

**ALTERATION No.3**

**EXAMINATION IN PUBLIC**

**REPORT OF THE PANEL**

**APRIL 1994**

CHAPTER 2 - GREATER YORK NEW SETTLEMENT

- Matter 2(a) Does the proposed Greater York new settlement represent an appropriate and justified policy response to the assessed development and requirements of the Greater York area?
- and 2(b) Is one new settlement appropriate and, if so, is the proposed size of the settlement sufficient to sustain an integrated and balanced community?

2.1.01 North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC) said the proposal for a new settlement was one of the major policy issues identified in the Greater York Study. The development strategy for Greater York for 1996-2006, was based on the development of agreed sites within and on the periphery of the built up area, while the residual requirement would be met by the development of a new settlement (or settlements) beyond the outer boundary of the Green Belt. Public consultation on the conclusions of that study had revealed widespread support for a new settlement. In 1991 all of the local authorities involved with Greater York had concurred with the strategic option of a new settlement. It was now supported by three Districts; Harrogate, Ryedale and Selby, but not York.

2.1.02 York City Council (YCC) said they no longer supported the proposal for a new settlement. Their change of view had been influenced by recent government guidance: PPG1 which stressed environmental considerations; para. 32 and 33 of PPG3 which indicated new settlements should be considered only as a last resort, and the draft PPG13 which stressed that the need to travel should be reduced. All this advice was less supportive of new settlements as a development option. They also considered that the level of the residual provision for Greater York of about 1,000 dwellings, now indicated insufficient justification for a new settlement beyond the Green Belt.

2.1.03 YCC considered a new settlement beyond the Green Belt would simply lead to more commuting into York. They believed new housing should be located on the edge of the main urban area where it would give more opportunity for use of public transport. It was unrealistic to expect a settlement of less than 20,000 people to be self-contained. At 1,400 or even 2,500 dwellings it would be no more than a large housing estate set in open countryside.

2.1.04 NYCC said they were promoting the concept of a new settlement because they were concerned to safeguard York's environment and the Green Belt. A settlement of 1,400 dwellings would accommodate about 3,300 people. It would be large enough to support social and community facilities, for example a primary school. They hoped it

## PANEL CONCLUSIONS

### Matter 2(a) Is the new settlement appropriate?

2.2.01 In considering whether the new settlement is an appropriate and justified planning response to some of Greater York's assessed housing requirements we recognise this is one of the major policy issues contained in Alt.3. We have paid particular regard to national planning guidance contained in para.33 PPG3. on new settlements. This advice states that a proposal for a new settlement should "normally only be contemplated" where alternative forms of development such as the "expansion of existing towns and villages would represent a less satisfactory method of providing land for the new housing that is needed". A proposal for a new settlement should be "a clear expression of local preference supported by local planning authorities" and "can be considered alongside policies of restraint to protect the rejected alternative locations from development pressure". Furthermore it should not be within a Green Belt.

2.2.02 We note that none of the District Councils had challenged the inclusion of Policy H2 in Alt. 3, while DOE confirmed that it is a strategic issue which should be settled by the Structure Plan process. We propose therefore to concentrate on the major points which we have identified from PPG3 in order to establish whether the new settlement is an appropriate response.

2.2.03 In reviewing the question of whether the new settlement offers a better alternative to the expansion of existing towns and villages, it is clear to us from the discussion on this specific point that even the opponents of the new settlement rejected the idea of major growth being grafted on to towns like Easingwold and Tadcaster. We accept that view and also acknowledge that none of the villages in the area of search was considered to be a suitable nucleus for expansion by the scale of development proposed for the new settlement.

2.2.04 We note however that YCC felt that peripheral expansion around the urban fringe of York would be a better solution than a new settlement; although they recognised that peripheral expansion could only be achieved at the expense of the Green Belt.

2.2.05 We cannot accept that is a realistic option because we have to assume the boundaries of the Green Belt will remain unchanged. We have proposed the provision for Greater York should be 8,900 dwellings. That level of growth is not inconsiderable, but it is more or less finite if current constraints, ie. the Green Belt, are maintained. Consequently we can see no alternative to a new settlement if the housing requirements of Greater York are to be met.

2.2.06 Despite the extensive housing commitments in the Greater York Area we have no doubt that the Green Belt will

increasingly constrain future growth around York. Equally the Green Belt will come under severe pressure, because it is so tightly drawn. We have already registered in our conclusions on Matter 1(d) our concern about the conflicts which are likely to arise, particularly post 2006, because of the need to maintain the integrity of the Green Belt while making some provision for future development.

2.2.07 As to local preference we note from the public consultation exercise associated with Alt. 3 that there was widespread public support for the principle of a new settlement. Equally we note that HGBC, RDC and SDC firmly support the new settlement proposal and they made it clear to us that they could not envisage an appropriate alternative way of satisfying the development needs of Greater York.

2.2.08 The opposing views represented to us by JCC and ME tended to reflect their conclusion that the new settlement could not be justified in terms of housing need; we note also that CPRE opposed the proposal on principle. HDC opposed a new settlement in their area and disputed the need for one on principle; however they also said they would not object to a new settlement in Selby District.

2.2.09 We are satisfied however that a new settlement is both an appropriate and inevitable response, with a substantial degree of local support.

Matter 2(b) Is more than one settlement needed, and how large should it be?

2.2.10 Discussion on this matter was effectively subsumed within that on Matter 2(a). It is clear to us that there would be no support for more than one settlement before 2006. We are satisfied that that is a correct approach given the level of development need. We also believe with a concentration of investment and resources into the creation of one new settlement there would be a better prospect for its success.

2.2.11 Turning to the question of size of the new settlement we were presented with a range of options by participants. Several of them preferred 1,400 or 1,500 dwellings while MCP suggested the settlement should be within a range of 1,500 - 2,000 dwellings. We note BWPP's preferred choice was 2,000 - 2,500 dwellings which equated to a population of about 5,000+, and could support a higher level of facilities and services than a settlement of about 1,500 dwellings.

2.2.12 We also take note of MCP's view that the optimum size for a new settlement in the context of Greater York and the surrounding countryside would be about 2,000 dwellings, whereas a settlement approaching the magnitude of 5,000 dwellings could not be assimilated into the landscape.

# ANNEXE III vii

NYCSP ALTERATION 3  
PANEL REPORT EXTRACT  
1994