

Publication title: Planning Policy Guidance 2: Green belts

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Summary

Planning Policy Guidance 2 (PPG2) outlines the history and extent of Green Belts and explains their purposes. It describes how Green Belts are designated and their land safeguarded. Green Belt land-use objectives are outlined and the presumption against inappropriate development is set out.

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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) 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 - 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 [Planning Policy Guidance 15: 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 (eg 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.