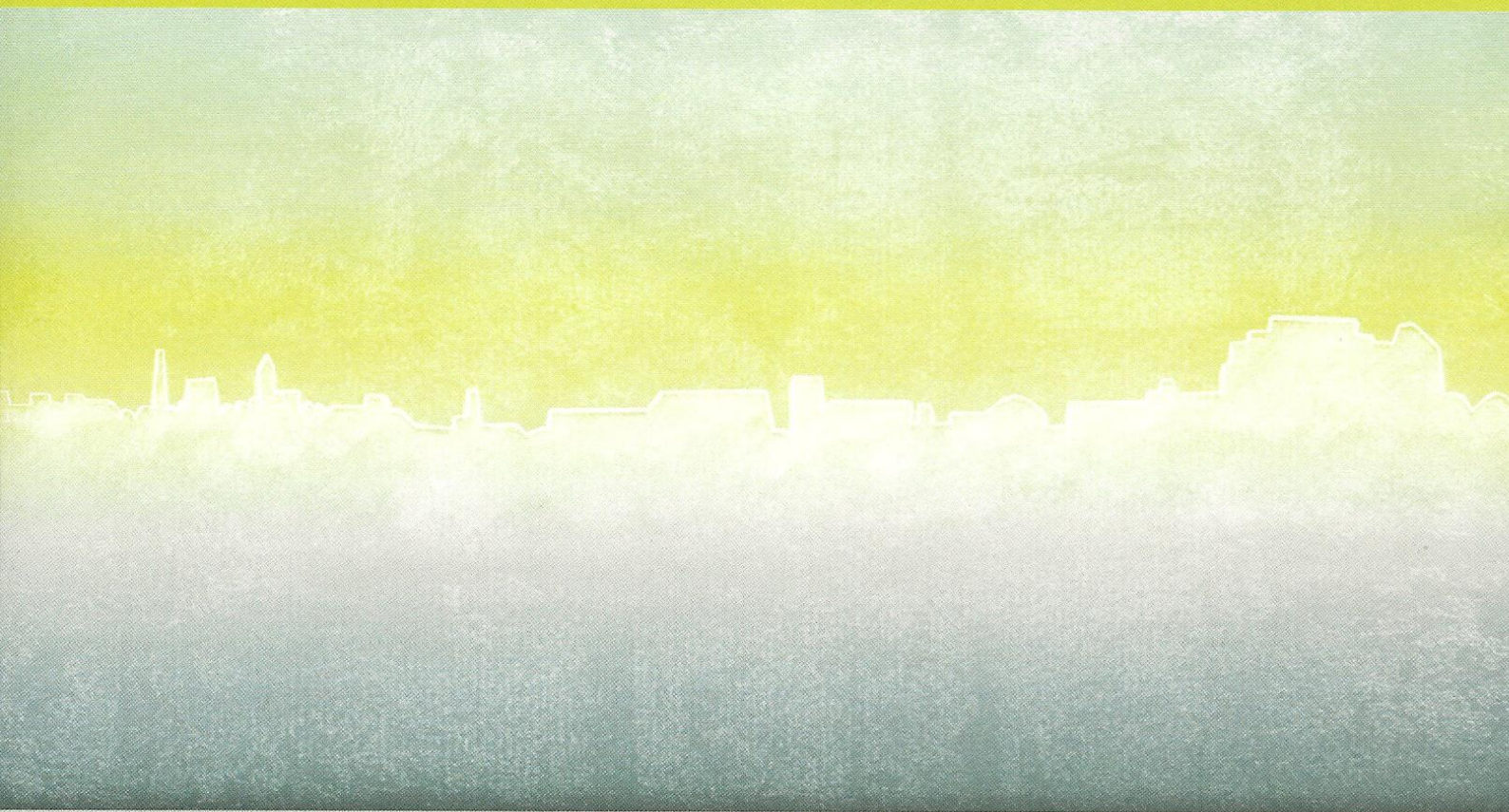


Kirkwells

The Planning People



NPPF Part 5: Green Belt

Introduction

1. To streamline national planning policy the Government has launched for consultation a draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
2. This is the fifth of our mini-guides to the main points in the draft Framework. In part 5, we cover Green Belt policy.
3. The Draft NPPF recognises the *great importance of Green Belts*, and reiterates the essential characteristic of their openness.
4. Draft NPPF includes the five purposes of Green Belts unaltered from Planning Policy Guidance Note 2 (PPG2).
5. The draft NPPF advises that local planning authorities should 'plan positively', and utilise the open space in a way that is *beneficial*, through providing opportunities such as sport and recreation, visual amenity and improvement of derelict land. Whilst similar objectives had been included in PPG2 fulfilling these objectives had not been a material factor in the "inclusion of land within a Green Belt, or in its continued protection."

Designation of Green Belts

6. Draft NPPF emphasises that the general extent of Green Belts has already been identified. It should not be necessary to designate new Green Belts except in exceptional circumstances.
7. Two new criteria have been added to this list of criteria local authorities should meet when defining boundaries. Firstly, to meet the duty to co-operate being introduced in the Localism Bill, they must demonstrate the Green Belts consistency with "Local Plans for adjoining areas". Secondly, and this is new, and its impact could be considerable, local planning authorities will have to "show how the Green Belt would meet the other objectives of the Framework".
8. To assist this, clear physical features should be used to mark the boundaries, though it is important not to include unnecessary land to keep open, as this jeopardizes the permanence of the open land in future development endeavours.

9. The importance of consistency with Local Plan strategy remains, as does the need to identify areas of 'safeguarded land' between urban areas and the Green Belt.
10. The reference in PPG2 to having a Green Belt several miles wide, where practicable, has been omitted in draft NPPF.
11. The treatment of villages within the Green Belt remains largely unchanged. These should be "washed over", included in the Green Belt, where development would be inappropriate, or inset where development is considered more acceptable.

Development in the Green Belt

12. Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. PPG's reference to "presumption against" inappropriate development omitted in Draft NPPF. Significantly, the onus on the applicant to demonstrate "very special circumstances" is also omitted.
13. The definitions of buildings that are not inappropriate, and other development not considered inappropriate are taken from PPG2 largely unaltered. Although facilities for outdoor sport, recreation and cemeteries should be "appropriate", not "essential". And the reference to "other uses of land" has been omitted.
14. Significant parts of PPG2 on the re-use of buildings are dropped from Draft NPPF, along with Park and Ride.
15. The Draft NPPF makes no mention of protecting the visual amenity that Green Belt provides.
16. The one notable exception in the draft NPPF is that development brought forward under a *Community Right to Build Order* need not be inappropriate. The Government describes this as giving 'groups of local people the power to deliver the development that their local community wants, with minimal red tape.'
17. The draft NPPF states development under a Community Right to Build Order would have to preserve openness and not conflict with the purposes of including land in the Green Belt.
18. A recent comment by the Planning Minister has suggested that development under a Community Right to Build Order may go further with up to 12 houses being acceptable.

19. For more information on the Community Right to Build Order, click [here](#).
20. Development considered inappropriate, will continue to have to demonstrate 'very special circumstances' where potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

What Next?

21. Does this affect you? Need to know more? Call Mick or Gareth on 01282 872570 they will be happy to provide free, initial, independent advice. Or email [Mick \(michaelwellock@kirkwells.co.uk\)](mailto:michaelwellock@kirkwells.co.uk), or [Gareth \(garethfort@kirkwells.co.uk\)](mailto:garethfort@kirkwells.co.uk) your questions, and we will get back to you to discuss your needs.

Further information

You can find out more about Kirkwells, including staff profiles, and details of all our services at www.kirkwells.co.uk

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