



## GREEN BELTS

Scottish Planning Policy (2014):

*SPP confirms that, where a planning authority considers it appropriate, the development plan may designate a green belt around a city or town to support the spatial strategy by:*

- *directing development to the most appropriate locations and supporting regeneration;*
- *protecting and enhancing the character, landscape setting and identity of the settlement; and*
- *protecting and providing access to open space.*

*In developing the spatial strategy, planning authorities should identify the most sustainable locations for longer-term development and, where necessary, review the boundaries of any green belt.*

*The spatial form of the green belt should be appropriate to the location. It may encircle a settlement or take the shape of a buffer, corridor, strip or wedge. Local development plans should show the detailed boundary of any green belt, giving consideration to:*

- *excluding existing settlements and major educational and research uses, major businesses and industrial operations, airports and Ministry of Defence establishments;*
- *the need for development in smaller settlements within the green belt, where appropriate leaving room for expansion;*
- *redirecting development pressure to more suitable locations; and*
- *establishing clearly identifiable visual boundary markers based on landscape features such as rivers, tree belts, railways or main roads. Hedges and field enclosures will rarely provide a sufficiently robust boundary.*

*Local development plans should describe the types and scales of development which would be appropriate within a green belt. These may include:*

- *development associated with agriculture, including the reuse of historic agricultural buildings;*
- *development associated with woodland and forestry, including community woodlands;*
- *horticulture, including market gardening and directly connected retailing;*
- *recreational uses that are compatible with an agricultural or natural setting;*
- *essential infrastructure such as digital communications infrastructure and electricity grid connections;*
- *development meeting a national requirement or established need, if no other suitable site is available; and*
- *intensification of established uses subject to the new development being of a suitable scale and form.*

### What has changed since 2014?

- Continued public and political interest in the role of green belts, including their detailed boundaries and the level of protection afforded to them.

**Proposed key objective of NPF4:** To direct planned growth to the most appropriate, sustainable locations whilst protecting and enhancing the character, landscape setting and identity of settlements and providing access to countryside recreation.

**Issues to consider:**

- Is the existing policy approach to green belts fit for purpose? What aspects need to change?
- What should the role of green belts be in terms of ensuring that spatial strategies can help climate change mitigation – e.g. water management and storage/floodplain capacity/carbon sequestration?
- How prescriptive should NPF4 be in identifying the issues for planning authorities to consider when designating green belts in local development plans and determining planning applications?
- Should NPF4 / regional spatial strategies have a role in identifying green belts? Or should this be left to local development plans?

## Get Involved

For more information and other resources



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