HANDFORTH TOWN COUNCIL

Here for the whole community

Town Clerk: Ashley Comiskey Dawson

Tel: 01625 523330

Email: clerk@handforthtowncouncil.gov.uk

Dealing with applications to build on Green Belt land

Green Belt Purposes (para 143 NPPF 2024 and update 2025)

The five purposes of the Green Belt are to:

a. Check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;

b. Prevent the merging of neighbouring towns;

c. Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;

d. Preserve the setting and special character of historic towns;

e. Assist urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

Development in the Green Belt (para 154 NPPF 2024 and update 2025)

Development in the Green Belt **is inappropriate** unless it falls within one of the categories (a –h):

a) buildings for agriculture and forestry;

b) the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use), including buildings, for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;

c) 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;

d) the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;

e) limited infilling in villages;

f) limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the development plan (including policies for rural exception sites);

g) limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land (including a material change of use to residential or mixed use including residential), whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt.

h) Other forms of development provided they preserve Green Belt openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it (e.g. mineral extraction)

Grey Belt (page 73 NPPF 2024)

For the purposes of plan-making and decision-making, 'Grey Belt' is defined as land in the Green Belt comprising previously developed land and/or any other land that, in either case, does not strongly contribute to any of purposes (a), (b), or (d) in paragraph 143 (see above) of the NPPF.

Order of site priority for building on Green Belt (Para 148. NPPF update 2025)

Where it is necessary to release Green Belt Land for development, plans should give priority to previously developed land, then consider Grey Belt which is not previously developed, and then other Green Belt locations.

When is building on Green Belt land NOT regarded as inappropriate? (NPPF update 2025)

The development of homes, commercial and other development in the Green Belt should also **no**t be regarded as inappropriate where **all** the following apply:

a. The development would utilise Grey Belt land and would not fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan;

b. There is a demonstrable unmet need for the type of development proposed ;

c. The development would be in a sustainable location, with particular reference to paragraphs 110 and 115 of the NPPF ;

d. Where applicable the development proposed meets the 'Golden Rules' requirements set out in paragraphs 156-157 below.

The Golden Rules (NPPF 2024 and amendments of 7 February 2025 paras 156 and 157)

Where major development involving the provision of housing is proposed on land released from the Green Belt through plan preparation or review, or on sites in the Green Belt subject to a planning application, the following contributions ('Golden Rules') should be made:

a. Affordable housing which reflects either: i. development plan policy requirements for major development on land within or released from the Green Belt (as established under policy HO5) or ii. until such policies are in place, a contribution which is 15 percentage points above the highest existing affordable housing requirement which would otherwise apply to the development, subject to a cap of a 50%.In the absence of a pre-existing requirement for affordable housing, a 50% affordable housing contribution should apply by default.

b. Necessary improvements to local or national infrastructure; and

c. The provision of new green space, or improvements to existing green space, which is accessible to the public.

Adopted by HTC Planning & Environment Committee on 10th February 2026