

### **Safeguarded Land in the Green Belt**

The NPPF sets the approach to defining the Green Belt boundaries. Its purpose is to help ensure that the Green Belt (as defined in this Plan) endures beyond the Plan period and that defensible boundaries are maintained.

Through the evidence base and the DtC process it has become apparent that Green Belt parcels straddle administrative boundaries. This is particularly true along the city's constrained southern boundary, where a number of land areas are separated through administrative boundaries. As such, when considered in isolation through the Coventry Local Plan the land in question is considered unsuitable for removal from the Green Belt due to the inability to create defensible boundaries that would endure beyond the plan period. When considered alongside development options within Warwick District however the land could provide longer term possibilities for the release of land from the Green Belt to support cross boundary development proposals in Warwick District. Given the nature of the areas involved though, the retention and delivery of infrastructure, most notably for highways, education or green spaces would be the main focus. This reflects the existing nature of these sites which largely comprise existing low-density homes, existing education provisions or ancient woodland.

As discussed in the context of Policy DS1 and DS2 however, the Council cannot place undue pressure on neighbouring authorities to develop on specific sites. It can however put a mechanism in place that responds to potential longer-term development options meaning its own Plan remains flexible and is able to respond to emerging circumstances in neighbouring areas. This also allows the Council to continue discharging its responsibilities through the DtC in an effective and continuous way.

Land along the southern boundary of Coventry is therefore intended to be designated as safeguarded land for consideration as part of the next Local Plan review. This will have explicit regard to development proposals within Warwick District that if brought forward for development over the course of this Plan period would create Green Belt policy 'islands' and therefore render the Green Belt policy designations in these areas inappropriate. In this context, these sites are safeguarded in so far as their long-term designation as 'Green Belt' is dependent upon the development of adjoining land in a neighbouring local authority. As already highlighted, the sites themselves are largely utilised for a small number of low-density homes, education provisions or are undevelopable due to the presence of ancient woodlands.

Should such development proposals not materialise within Warwick District however, these sites will be considered for a formal return to the Green Belt due to the issues raised above.

### **Policy GB2: Safeguarded Land in the Green Belt**

1. The areas of Safeguarded Land proposed partly or wholly comprise the following sites and are shown on the Policies Map.

- a) Land south of Westwood Heath Road;
- b) Land south of Bishop Ullathorne School;
- c) Playing Field south of Finham Park School; and
- d) Land west of Finham Primary School.

Any development of these sites will be subject to consideration through a full or partial review of this Local Plan having explicit regard to development proposals in Warwick District.

Paragraph 85 of the NPPF expressly mentions the opportunity to safeguard land within the Green Belt as part of a Local Plan. It is not however allocated for development at the present time and is instead identified for consideration through future plan reviews. As such, planning permission for the permanent development of safeguarded land will only be granted following a Local Plan review which proposes the development. In this context, should cross boundary development proposals within Warwick District include the wider development of any of these areas as part of a comprehensive development proposal then the Council will consider the significance of this in relation to the sites and the wider proposals. The Council will then determine if a need exists to undertake a targeted review of its Local Plan in this regard. This would be in accordance with Policy DS1 of this Plan. Such an event would also trigger the review of the Council's Local Development Scheme with a view to supporting the delivery of cross boundary evidence or development plan documents (as appropriate) in accordance with Policy DS2.

Of particular relevance is the existing use and purpose of these sites. In this context the future review of these safeguarded areas is unlikely to trigger the comprehensive development or redevelopment of these areas. Instead it will respond to changes in Green Belt policy and seek to remove any cases of Green Belt islands having been created by adjoining developments in Warwick District. This especially relates to the education facilities at Bishop Ullathorne and Finham Park (primary and secondary). In such cases development proposals must ensure that the city's education requirements continue to be met and where appropriate, support sustainable accessibility to school places for residents of new homes.

The Council considers this approach will support sustainable development, support on-going commitment to discharging the DtC in this respect and the long-term protection and management of the Green Belt to the south of the city.