

AMBER VALLEY LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION IN PUBLIC

STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

MATTER3: Green Belt

- i) Should a full Green Belt boundary review have been undertaken as part of the evidence base for the Local Plan?
 - ii. Have exceptional circumstances been demonstrated to enable the alteration of Green Belt boundaries?
 - iii. What are the exceptional circumstances which justify an amendment to the Green Belt boundary at land north of Denby? Has its removal from the Green Belt been considered based on clear criteria?
 - iv. Should the area of land to be removed from the Green Belt be allocated as Safeguarded Land, given that it is not proposed to be developed in the Plan period?
 - v. Have reasonable alternatives outside the Green Belt been considered?
 - vi. On what basis has the Council concluded that, other than in relation to the land north of Denby, there are no other locations in the Borough where exceptional circumstances have been demonstrated?
 - vii. Should land be removed from the Green Belt in Amber Valley to meet part of the unmet housing need in Derby?
 - viii. Should the loss of Green Belt land be compensated for?
- 1.1 This statement has been drafted on behalf of Derbyshire County Council's Officers to support their views that the policy approach to Green Belt in Policies SS9 and SS10 of the Amber Valley Submission Local Plan (AVSLP) are appropriate and justified.
- 1.2 In its comments on the Amber Valley Local Plan Pre-Submission (LPPS), DCC's Officers welcomed and supported the Borough Council's commitment to protecting the Green Belt in paragraph 6.9.2 of the Plan. The comments also supported the Borough Council's view in the Plan that no other exceptional circumstances had been demonstrated to justify any other amendments to the Green Belt boundary other than in respect of the release of Green Belt in association with the allocation of land north of Denby as a strategic growth site under Policy HGS15. This approach was considered to be appropriate and justified as the Borough Council has been able to identify sufficient land on non-Green Belt sites to meet the Borough's housing requirement of 9,770 dwellings over the Plan period, which takes into account an allowance of 2,350 dwellings to meet the unmet housing needs arising in Derby City.

- 1.3 In respect of the strategic growth site on land north of Denby, DCC's Officers considered that the release of additional land within the Green Belt was justified on the basis of 'exceptional circumstances' as this would help facilitate the comprehensive redevelopment of the site for a strategic housing and employment site, which together with a range of other uses, including a new primary school and local centre, would provide for a new sustainable settlement and would help meet a significant proportion of the Borough Council's overall housing requirements of 9,770 dwellings within the Plan period. DCC's comments, however, highlighted that careful consideration will need to be given to the inclusion of the land within the Green Belt to ensure that the main Green Belt purposes set out in the NPPF are not undermined or compromised by the land's development as proposed.
- 1.4 DCC's Officer comments on the LPPS indicated that the position set out in paragraph 6.2.33 was supported, in which the Borough Council acknowledged that there will be a need for it to undertake a comprehensive review of the Green Belt boundaries in the Borough in the context of a subsequent review of the Local Plan. DCC's Officers consider, however, that such a review is likely to require the need for extensive joint working with the County Council and the other local authorities in the Derby Housing Market Area (HMA) of Derby City Council and South Derbyshire District Council. This is based on an assumption that the future reviews of the three local authorities' Local Plans will be based on an assessment of the future housing needs of the Derby HMA as a whole and as a consequence, it may be likely that a comprehensive review of the whole of the Nottingham – Derby Green Belt within the HMA would be justified and appropriate to consider whether revision of Green Belt boundaries would be necessary to accommodate new housing provision to meet the objectively assessed housing needs of the HMA over the next Plan period and particularly to ensure consistency of approach and methodology.
- 1.5 In the context of the need for Green Belt release within Amber Valley Borough to meet the unmet housing needs of Derby City, DCC's Officers worked jointly with Officers from Amber Valley Borough Council, Derby City Council, South Derbyshire District Council and Erewash Borough in 2012 to carry out a Strategic Review of the Derby Principal Urban Area Green Belt.
- 1.6 The purpose of the joint Strategic Review was to carry out an assessment of the five Green Belt purposes of the area of the Nottingham – Derby Green Belt, which covers the periphery of Derby – the Derby Principal Urban Area Green Belt. The five Green Belt purposes are set out in the NPPF. The assessment of these purposes was required by AVBC, the City Council, SDDC and EBC to form part of the evidence base to inform the preparation of Local Plans (Core Strategies), which were being prepared by the four councils at the time of the Review.
- 1.7 At the time the Review was carried out in 2012, Green Belt policy at a strategic level for the Green Belt area within the Derby HMA was set out in the East Midlands Regional Plan (EMRP). A Review of the Nottingham-Derby Green Belt was carried out in 2006 / 2007 jointly by Officers of Derbyshire County Council and Nottinghamshire County Council to inform the growth strategy for

the Three Cities Sub-Area set out in the EMRP, which included the Derby HMA. The Review particularly informed the approach to Green Belt policy in the Three Cities Sub-Area, identifying areas of Green Belt which might be subject to review to accommodate future growth needs. The Review included an assessment of the five Green Belt purposes of very broad and extensive areas of the Green Belt, including areas around Derby. The methodology for undertaking the review and its findings and conclusions was deemed to be robust and sound by the Government appointed Panel, which examined the EMRP in 2008.

- 1.8 Given the pending revocation of the EMRP in 2012, it was considered necessary by the five authorities to carry out a further and more detailed review of the Derby Principal Urban Area Green Belt and the five main Green Belt purposes. The NPPF was published in March 2012, which set out the new duty for local authorities to cooperate in the plan making process, particularly on matters of cross-boundary strategic planning policy importance. It was in the context of the 'Duty to Cooperate' that the five authorities came together to prepare the review of the Green Belt purposes around Derby.
- 1.9 The Derby Principal Urban Area Green Belt Review, therefore, built on previous work undertaken in the Nottingham – Derby Green Belt Review. It also applied a similar methodology. Officers of the five authorities jointly agreed and defined five broad areas around the Principal Urban Area of Derby as the basis for the assessment. These broad areas included Direction A: Derby North West; Direction B: Derby North; Direction C: Derby North East; Direction D: Derby East; and Direction E: Derby South East. The main broad area falling within Amber Valley Borough was Area A: Derby North West.
- 1.10 The main findings and conclusions of the Green Belt Review were that all five broad areas of Green Belt around Derby continued to fulfil the five purposes of Green Belts well. However, the Review noted that the location of the Green Belt around Boulton Moor in South Derbyshire District had seen significant change take place since the 1990s through the construction of the A50 and A6 strategic highways, which formed key permanent physical features in the landscape between Derby and Aston-on-Trent. The Review concluded that this change in physical features may mean that minor amendments to the Green Belt boundary in this area may be appropriate. It was noted, in particular, that an area of Green Belt bounded by London Road and the A6 Spur appeared 'land locked' and no longer contributed to the openness of the Green Belt. Similarly, a parcel of land to the south-west of Thulston appeared to perform a Green Belt role and could, therefore, be incorporated within the Green Belt. The Review did not identify any areas of the PUA Green Belt within Amber Valley Borough which may have warranted further consideration for amendment to Green Belt Boundaries.
- 1.11 In terms of Area A: Derby North West the Review concluded that;

Overall the Green Belt in this location performs well against the Green Belt purposes set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Its

function in constraining the northward sprawl of the City and the merging of the urban areas of Derby, Duffield, Quarndon and Belper is important.

One of the main functions of the Green Belt when it was defined was to prevent the coalescence of urban development along the Derwent Valley between Derby and Belper.

The Green Belt in this location helps to define the distinct settlements and to preserve their settings, while protecting the open countryside from encroachment and to preserve the historic assets within the World Heritage Site.

Generally all of the Green Belt on the periphery of Derby assists in directing development to more sustainable regeneration and brownfield sites within the city and other urban areas by restricting development in less sustainable peripheral greenfield locations.

- 1.12 In seeking to meet their emerging housing requirements, particularly in meeting the future housing requirements of Derby City, the three HMA authorities have progressed their Local Plan / Core strategies on the basis of seeking to meet these housing needs on land outside the Green Belt, particularly as Sustainable Urban Extensions to the City also located within Amber Valley Borough and South Derbyshire District.

Steve Buffery
Team Leader
Planning Policy and Monitoring
Derbyshire County Council