

GREEN BELT POLICIES

GB/1 – Green Belt boundaries

The boundaries of the Green Belt are defined on the Proposals Map.

Sustainability Appraisal Objectives [abridged in some cases]	Assessment			Comments / Proposed Mitigation
	Short	Med.	Long	

1.1 Minimise irreversible loss of undeveloped land and productive agricultural holdings	~	~	~	
1.2 Reduce the use of non-renewable resources including energy	~	~	~	
1.3 Limit water consumption to sustainable levels	~	~	~	
2.1 Avoid damage to designated sites and protected species	~	~	~	
2.2 Maintain / enhance range and viability of characteristic habitats and species	~	~	~	
2.3 Improve opportunities for people to access the countryside and wild places	~	~	~	
3.1 Avoid damage to designated historic sites and their settings	~	~	~	
3.2 Maintain diversity and distinctiveness of landscape and townscape	~	~	~	
3.3. Create places and spaces that look good and work well	~	~	~	
4.1 Reduce emission of greenhouse gases and other	~	~	~	

pollutants			
4.2 Minimise waste production and support recycling	~	~	~
4.3 Limit or reduce vulnerability to flooding and other climate change impacts	~	~	~
5.1 Maintain and enhance human health	~	~	~
5.2 Reduce and prevent crime and the fear of crime	~	~	~
5.3 Improve the quantity and quality of publicly accessible open space	~	~	~
6.1 Improve the quality, range and accessibility of services and facilities	~	~	~
6.2 Redress inequalities in age, gender, race, location, faith, disability, etc.	~	~	~
6.3 Ensure all groups have access to decent, appropriate and affordable housing	~	~	~
6.4 Encourage and enable active involvement of local people in the community	~	~	~
7.1 Help people gain access to satisfying work appropriate to skills, potential and location	~	~	~
7.2 Support appropriate investment in people, places, communications and infrastructure	~	~	~
7.3. Improve the efficiency, competitiveness, vitality and adaptability of the local economy	~	~	~
Summary of assessment: This is a procedural policy indicating where the extent of the Green Belt will be legally defined. Defining on the Proposals Map formally incorporates it into the LDF and district planning policy. As such the option cannot be assessed. Any impacts of the Green Belt are covered by the assessment of policy GB/2.			

Summary of mitigation proposals: None – see below.

Secondary, cumulative or synergistic effects: The Council is assumed to have an underlying intention of preserving the Green Belt as far as possible. Developments such as Northstowe are mitigated by compensatory redesignation of land, but overall this represents a loss of the district's 'stock' of open land. Developments such as Northstowe are predicated on decisions taken high in the planning structure, but this raises the issue of whether this should result in more stringent controls on how much Green Belt land is removed and/or replaced as a result of other developments in order to limit the loss of open land in the longer term. (In practical terms this comment implies a concern that repeated redesignation of Green Belt land may weaken its role in managing development.)

GB/2 – Development in the Green Belt

Planning permission will only be granted within the Green Belt in very special circumstances (defined in 8 points). Inappropriate development will not be permitted and any form of development may require landscaping.

Sustainability Appraisal Objectives [abridged in some cases]	Assessment			Comments / Proposed Mitigation
	Short	Med.	Long	
1.1 Minimise irreversible loss of undeveloped land and productive agricultural holdings	+++	+++	+++	Clearly one of the two main objectives of this policy.
1.2 Reduce the use of non-renewable resources including energy	~	~	~	
1.3 Limit water consumption to sustainable levels	~	~	~	
2.1 Avoid damage to designated sites and protected species	+	+	+	Supportive in principle as such sites will lie beyond urban edge.
2.2 Maintain / enhance range and viability of characteristic habitats and species	+	+	+	Supports maintenance.
2.3 Improve opportunities for people to access the countryside and wild places	+	+	+	Ensures that open countryside surrounds settlements (proximity), although accessibility depends on rights of way.
3.1 Avoid damage to designated historic sites and their settings	+	+	+	

3.2 Maintain diversity and distinctiveness of landscape and townscape	+++	+++	+++	Within 1.1 the other principal objective of this policy.
3.3. Create places and spaces that look good and work well	++	++	++	Supports 3.2.
4.1 Reduce emission of greenhouse gases and other pollutants	?	?	?	Impact of traffic growth which may occur as a result of permitting development of leisure facilities?
4.2 Minimise waste production and support recycling	~	~	~	
4.3 Limit or reduce vulnerability to flooding and other climate change impacts	(+)	(+)	(+)	As vegetation helps to fix carbon it can be argued that the policy supports this objective indirectly.
5.1 Maintain and enhance human health	?	?	?	Depends whether land is available for recreational use.
5.2 Reduce and prevent crime and the fear of crime	~	~	~	
5.3 Improve the quantity and quality of publicly accessible open space	++?	++?	++?	Supportive in principal though designation does not imply public accessibility.
6.1 Improve the quality, range and accessibility of services and facilities	~	~	~	
6.2 Redress inequalities in age, gender, race, location, faith, disability, etc.	~	~	~	
6.3 Ensure all groups have access to decent, appropriate and affordable housing	~	~	~	
6.4 Encourage and enable active involvement of local people in the community	~	~	~	
7.1 Help people gain access to satisfying work appropriate to skills, potential and location	~	~	~	
7.2 Support appropriate investment in people, places, communications and infrastructure	~	~	~	

7.3. Improve the efficiency, competitiveness, vitality and adaptability of the local economy

~ ~ ~

Summary of assessment: Overall the policy is clearly prevents *loss of agricultural land, maintains local character*, and provides the opportunity for *accessible open space* within easy reach of settlements.

Summary of mitigation proposals: Condition 2 of the policy permits appropriate development for recreational and leisure use. Should the policy or the supporting text indicate that ‘appropriate’ should be determined not only by maintaining the open character of the land but also that it should not result in excessive traffic since this indirectly affects the character and tranquillity of the area. This issue is partly addressed in GB/6 by encouraging non-car access, but traffic impacts are not mentioned specifically.

Secondary, cumulative or synergistic effects: None identified.

GB/3 – Location and design of development

Development considered appropriate must be located and designed so it has no adverse effect on the character and openness of the Green Belt.

Sustainability Appraisal Objectives [abridged in some cases]

Assessment

Comments / Proposed Mitigation

Short Med. Long

1.1 Minimise irreversible loss of undeveloped land and productive agricultural holdings

~ ~ ~

1.2 Reduce the use of non-renewable resources including energy

~ ~ ~

1.3 Limit water consumption to sustainable levels

~ ~ ~

2.1 Avoid damage to designated sites and protected species

~ ~ ~

2.2 Maintain / enhance range and viability of characteristic habitats and species

~ ~ ~

2.3 Improve opportunities for people to access the countryside and wild places

~ ~ ~

3.1 Avoid damage to designated historic sites and their settings	?	?	?	Depends on locality although in principle the policy is supportive
3.2 Maintain diversity and distinctiveness of landscape and townscape	+++	+++	+++	The principal objective of this policy.
3.3. Create places and spaces that look good and work well	++	++	++	Supports 3.2.
4.1 Reduce emission of greenhouse gases and other pollutants	~	~	~	
4.2 Minimise waste production and support recycling	~	~	~	
4.3 Limit or reduce vulnerability to flooding and other climate change impacts	~	~	~	
5.1 Maintain and enhance human health	~	~	~	
5.2 Reduce and prevent crime and the fear of crime	~	~	~	
5.3 Improve the quantity and quality of publicly accessible open space	?	?	?	Maintains quality of open space although does not imply public accessibility.
6.1 Improve the quality, range and accessibility of services and facilities	~	~	~	
6.2 Redress inequalities in age, gender, race, location, faith, disability, etc.	~	~	~	
6.3 Ensure all groups have access to decent, appropriate and affordable housing	~	~	~	
6.4 Encourage and enable active involvement of local people in the community	~	~	~	
7.1 Help people gain access to satisfying work appropriate to skills, potential and location	~	~	~	

7.2 Support appropriate investment in people, places, communications and infrastructure	~	~	~
7.3. Improve the efficiency, competitiveness, vitality and adaptability of the local economy	~	~	~
Summary of assessment: Little to comment on; clearly supportive.			
Summary of mitigation proposals: If the Council has prepared design guidelines should these be referenced in the supporting text? Equally, the text might make it clear if guidelines are to be covered in forthcoming guidance, possibly as an SPD.			
Secondary, cumulative or synergistic effects: None identified.			

GB/4 – Landscaping & design measures

Development on the edge of settlements must be carefully landscaped and designed to minimise the visual impact on the adjacent Green Belt.

Sustainability Appraisal Objectives [abridged in some cases]	Assessment			Comments / Proposed Mitigation
	Short	Med.	Long	
1.1 Minimise irreversible loss of undeveloped land and productive agricultural holdings	~	~	~	
1.2 Reduce the use of non-renewable resources including energy	~	~	~	
1.3 Limit water consumption to sustainable levels	~	~	~	
2.1 Avoid damage to designated sites and protected species	~	~	~	
2.2 Maintain / enhance range and viability of characteristic habitats and species	~	~	~	
2.3 Improve opportunities for people to access the countryside and wild places	~	~	~	

3.1 Avoid damage to designated historic sites and their settings	?	?	?	Depends on proximity of sites, but supportive in principle.
3.2 Maintain diversity and distinctiveness of landscape and townscape	+++	+++	+++	The principal objective of this policy.
3.3. Create places and spaces that look good and work well	++	++	++	Supports 3.2.
4.1 Reduce emission of greenhouse gases and other pollutants	~	~	~	
4.2 Minimise waste production and support recycling	~	~	~	
4.3 Limit or reduce vulnerability to flooding and other climate change impacts	~	~	~	
5.1 Maintain and enhance human health	~	~	~	
5.2 Reduce and prevent crime and the fear of crime	~	~	~	
5.3 Improve the quantity and quality of publicly accessible open space	~	~	~	(Addresses visual impact not availability of open space.)
6.1 Improve the quality, range and accessibility of services and facilities	~	~	~	
6.2 Redress inequalities in age, gender, race, location, faith, disability, etc.	~	~	~	
6.3 Ensure all groups have access to decent, appropriate and affordable housing	~	~	~	
6.4 Encourage and enable active involvement of local people in the community	~	~	~	
7.1 Help people gain access to satisfying work appropriate to skills, potential and location	~	~	~	

7.2 Support appropriate investment in people, places, communications and infrastructure	~	~	~
7.3. Improve the efficiency, competitiveness, vitality and adaptability of the local economy	~	~	~
Summary of assessment: As with GB/3, aims to minimise the impact on the <i>landscape character</i> of the Green Belt of any peripheral development that is considered appropriate.			
Summary of mitigation proposals: As for GB/3.			
Secondary, cumulative or synergistic effects: None identified.			

GB/5 – Major developed sites

Identifies four major sites and defines the nature of development that would be permitted within their boundaries.

Sustainability Appraisal Objectives [abridged in some cases]	Assessment			Comments / Proposed Mitigation
	Short	Med.	Long	
1.1 Minimise irreversible loss of undeveloped land and productive agricultural holdings	~	~	~	Technically, land within the sites is brownfield land. The policy is neutral provided the constraints on development do not result in an extension of the site onto adjacent land (which might be resisted by policy GB/2).
1.2 Reduce the use of non-renewable resources including energy	?	?	?	Not possible to assume without understanding the nature of redevelopment, however the current policy focuses on footprint only. See comments under mitigation below.
1.3 Limit water consumption to sustainable levels	?	?	?	As above.
2.1 Avoid damage to designated sites and protected species	~	~	~	
2.2 Maintain / enhance range and viability of characteristic habitats and species	+	+	+	Policy provides for no net expansion of developed land within these sites (all of which have a parkland setting). Redevelopment should not result in loss of important vegetation / biodiversity

				features, though this should be implemented through the EIA process.
2.3 Improve opportunities for people to access the countryside and wild places	~	~	~	
3.1 Avoid damage to designated historic sites and their settings	+	+	+	Positive although benefits are confined to a small area.
3.2 Maintain diversity and distinctiveness of landscape and townscape	+	+	+	As above.
3.3. Create places and spaces that look good and work well	+	+	+	As above.
4.1 Reduce emission of greenhouse gases and other pollutants	~	~	~	Effect is neutral provided redevelopment does not result in a sizeable increase in employment levels or changes in industrial process that increasing vehicle trips to/from the site.
4.2 Minimise waste production and support recycling	~	~	~	
4.3 Limit or reduce vulnerability to flooding and other climate change impacts	~	~	~	
5.1 Maintain and enhance human health	~	~	~	
5.2 Reduce and prevent crime and the fear of crime	~	~	~	
5.3 Improve the quantity and quality of publicly accessible open space	~	~	~	Sites have constraints on public access.
6.1 Improve the quality, range and accessibility of services and facilities	~	~	~	
6.2 Redress inequalities in age, gender, race, location, faith, disability, etc.	~	~	~	
6.3 Ensure all groups have access to decent,	~	~	~	

appropriate and affordable housing			
6.4 Encourage and enable active involvement of local people in the community	~	~	~
7.1 Help people gain access to satisfying work appropriate to skills, potential and location	~	~	~
7.2 Support appropriate investment in people, places, communications and infrastructure	~	~	~
7.3. Improve the efficiency, competitiveness, vitality and adaptability of the local economy	~	~	~
Summary of assessment: A supportive policy necessitated by the presence of large campus sites with land potentially available for redevelopment, but lying within the open area of the Green Belt. The policy controls horizontal and vertical redevelopment.			
Summary of mitigation proposals: It is not clear what redevelopment is envisaged, though the sites are a mixture of medical, research and manufacturing uses. In the light of Objectives 1.2 and 1.3 it could be made clearer that land use changes that result in significant changes in resource use, especially of water, would be resisted. However such provisions might be made in the Development Briefs mentioned in the supporting text.			
Secondary, cumulative or synergistic effects: None as these are isolated sites.			

GB/6 – Recreation in the Green Belt				
Encourages use of Green Belt land for recreation provided land use change is sympathetic and facilities are conveniently close to built-up areas and/or readily accessible by non-car modes of transport.				
Sustainability Appraisal Objectives [abridged in some cases]	Assessment			Comments / Proposed Mitigation
	Short	Med.	Long	
1.1 Minimise irreversible loss of undeveloped land and productive agricultural holdings	?	?	?	It is not clear whether farm diversification through the release of land in a suitable location for non-agricultural purposes would be permitted.
1.2 Reduce the use of non-renewable resources including energy	?	?	?	Facilities such as country parks have near-neutral impact, however the level of provision of amenities such as showers, etc.

				needs to be controlled. Overall effect likely to be neutral
1.3 Limit water consumption to sustainable levels	?	?	?	As above.
2.1 Avoid damage to designated sites and protected species	~	~	~	Adverse impacts should be prevented by planning application process and the policy does not preclude sensitive development enabling the public to visit designated sites (see 2.3 below).
2.2 Maintain / enhance range and viability of characteristic habitats and species	+	+	+	Intrinsically protects some land from possible redevelopment and maintains its openness. Development should not result in loss of important vegetational, water and other features, but the overall effect is assumed to be positive.
2.3 Improve opportunities for people to access the countryside and wild places	+++	+++	+++	One of two principal objectives of this policy.
3.1 Avoid damage to designated historic sites and their settings	~	~	~	Assumed that redevelopment would not be permitted in the proximity of historic sites (eg. in grounds of halls, houses, etc.).
3.2 Maintain diversity and distinctiveness of landscape and townscape	++	++	++	Aims to provide for a variation in landscape that is still sympathetic and aims to provide for land uses other than agriculture around settlement edges.
3.3. Create places and spaces that look good and work well	++	++	++	Supports 3.2. Provision of convenient recreation outside the urban area should contribute to residents' satisfaction with their surroundings.
4.1 Reduce emission of greenhouse gases and other pollutants	+	+	+	Supportive if accessibility encourage less use of cars, and the indirect carbon-fixing benefits of the vegetation.
4.2 Minimise waste production and support recycling	~	~	~	
4.3 Limit or reduce vulnerability to flooding and other climate change impacts	~	~	~	
5.1 Maintain and enhance human health	++	++	++	Accessible recreational facilities encourage exercise.

5.2 Reduce and prevent crime and the fear of crime	~	~	~	
5.3 Improve the quantity and quality of publicly accessible open space	++	++(+)	+++	The other principal objective of this policy. Effect is assumed to build over time as facilities are added.
6.1 Improve the quality, range and accessibility of services and facilities	+(+)	++	++(+)	Addresses requirements for better accessibility for leisure facilities, and helping to reduce dependence on private cars.
6.2 Redress inequalities in age, gender, race, location, faith, disability, etc.	~	~	~	
6.3 Ensure all groups have access to decent, appropriate and affordable housing	~	~	~	
6.4 Encourage and enable active involvement of local people in the community	~	~	~	
7.1 Help people gain access to satisfying work appropriate to skills, potential and location	?	?	?	Might contribute to rural diversification, though this depends on the nature of the redevelopment.
7.2 Support appropriate investment in people, places, communications and infrastructure	~	~	~	
7.3. Improve the efficiency, competitiveness, vitality and adaptability of the local economy	(+)	(+)	(+)	Appropriate development could support sustainable tourism, but this might offset other benefits of the basic policy (eg. reduced private car use) and should not entail inappropriately extensive development.
Summary of assessment: Supports objectives of accessible open space and maintaining landscape character by ensuring there is a range of countryside 'land uses' (ie. not just agricultural land) around settlements as they expand.				
Summary of mitigation proposals: The policy and its supporting text does not refer to the nature of recreational developments, which appears potentially broad in type and impact. Country parks are mentioned and, implicitly, footpaths and bridleways. However other new development such as farmland turned over to golf courses, driving ranges and other non-agricultural uses are not mentioned specifically and the nature of these developments would need to be controlled carefully where they are acceptable.				

Secondary, cumulative or synergistic effects: Synergistic impact of out-of-town recreational space combined with open space provision within settlements (the assessment assumes recreational features are not included in open space targets). There is also a longer-term synergistic effect of adopting a strategy for managing recreational facilities in the Green Belt – as proposed in the supporting text – if this supports provision and variety.

GB/7 – Improvements to landscape and biodiversity

The Council aims to reverse declining habitat quality in the Green Belt through additional planting and habitat creation.

Sustainability Appraisal Objectives [abridged in some cases]	Assessment			Comments / Proposed Mitigation
	Short	Med.	Long	
1.1 Minimise irreversible loss of undeveloped land and productive agricultural holdings	~	~	~	
1.2 Reduce the use of non-renewable resources including energy	~	~	~	
1.3 Limit water consumption to sustainable levels	~	~	~	
2.1 Avoid damage to designated sites and protected species	+	+	+	Implicitly supportive, although the condition of designated sites is primarily the responsibility of other agencies.
2.2 Maintain / enhance range and viability of characteristic habitats and species	+	+(+)	++	Clearly supportive of this objective, and supporting text makes specific mention of land and aquatic features, trees and linear habitats. Effect builds over time as new planting takes hold.
2.3 Improve opportunities for people to access the countryside and wild places	+	+(+)	++	Proposals do not necessarily attract people to the countryside and the supporting text acknowledges the need to protect some sites as they are re-established. Any negative impact must be outweighed by the clear benefits of improving biodiversity and husbandry of countryside resources.
3.1 Avoid damage to designated historic sites and their settings	+?	+?	+?	Depends where improvements occur – at worst the effect is neutral.

3.2 Maintain diversity and distinctiveness of landscape and townscape	+	+(+)	++	Clearly supportive, and recognises the need to manage and regenerate features to maintain their quality. Activities will take time to deliver improvements so effect grows.
3.3. Create places and spaces that look good and work well	+	+	+	Supports 3.2.
4.1 Reduce emission of greenhouse gases and other pollutants	?	?	?	Carbon-fixing benefit of vegetation?
4.2 Minimise waste production and support recycling	~	~	~	
4.3 Limit or reduce vulnerability to flooding and other climate change impacts	~	~	~	
5.1 Maintain and enhance human health	~	~	~	
5.2 Reduce and prevent crime and the fear of crime	~	~	~	
5.3 Improve the quantity and quality of publicly accessible open space	+	+(+)	++	Text wording implies the council rather than private landowners have responsibility for these improvements, and this suggests they would occur where the public can enjoy the results.
6.1 Improve the quality, range and accessibility of services and facilities	~	~	~	Any leisure benefits implicit in 5.3.
6.2 Redress inequalities in age, gender, race, location, faith, disability, etc.	~	~	~	
6.3 Ensure all groups have access to decent, appropriate and affordable housing	~	~	~	
6.4 Encourage and enable active involvement of local people in the community	+	+	+	Supporting text makes mention of coordinating work with volunteer groups.
7.1 Help people gain access to satisfying work appropriate to skills, potential and location	~	~	~	

7.2 Support appropriate investment in people, places, communications and infrastructure	~	~	~
7.3. Improve the efficiency, competitiveness, vitality and adaptability of the local economy	~	~	~
Summary of assessment: Clearly sustainable with a strong positive environmental focus that recognises countryside resources must need management to maintain quality.			
Summary of mitigation proposals: None.			
Secondary, cumulative or synergistic effects: None identified – policy is a reaction to secondary effects of agricultural practices.			