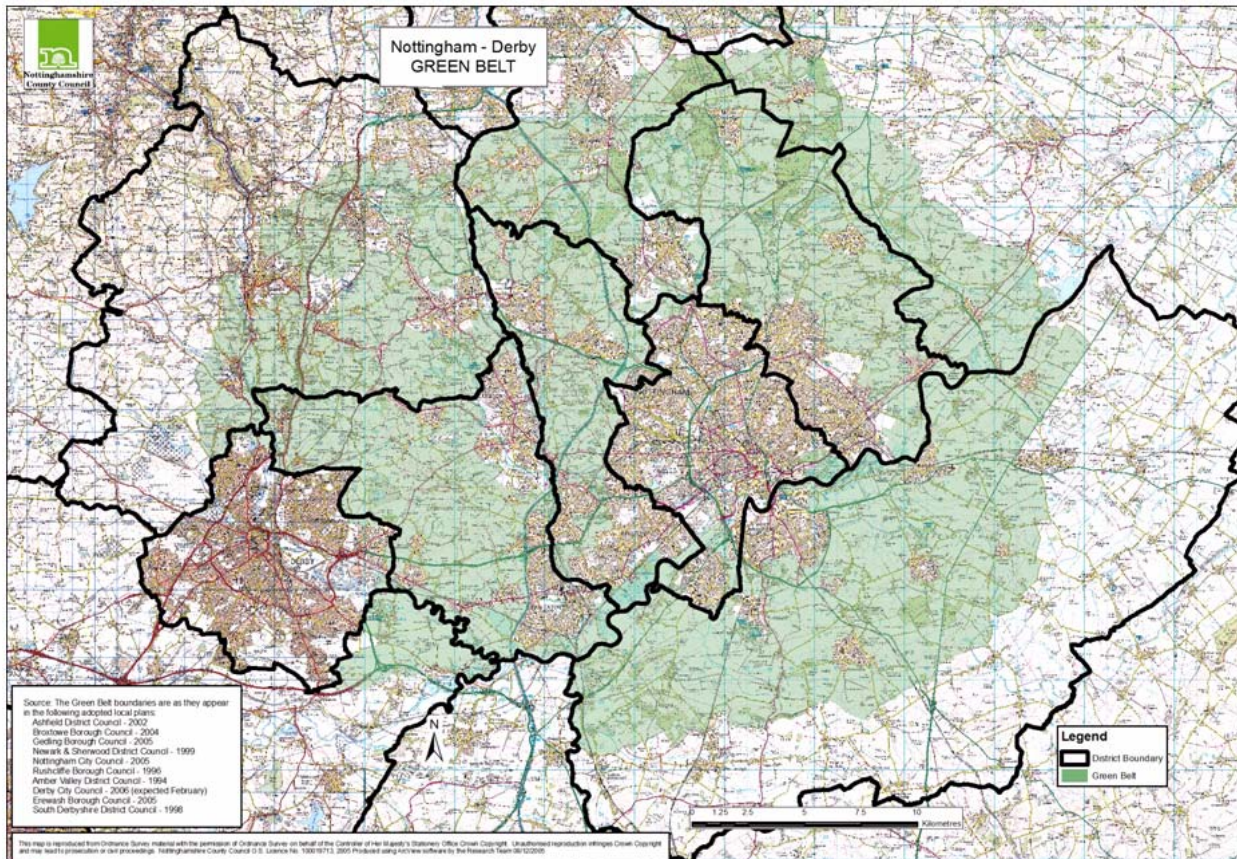


# Nottingham-Derby Green Belt Review



Lynette Hughes  
Nottinghamshire County Council  
and  
Steve Buffery  
Derbyshire County Council  
24 August 2006

## KS/GRE/01

This is an information and discussion paper. It is the work of officers and has not been formally considered by any authority. It therefore does not represent the views of any authority or other body. Comments on the paper are welcome and can be forwarded to [lynette.hughes@nottscc.gov.uk](mailto:lynette.hughes@nottscc.gov.uk) or [steve.buffery@derbyshire.co.uk](mailto:steve.buffery@derbyshire.co.uk).

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The review comprises:

1. The working paper drafted in March 2006 and finalised in April 2006
2. The assessment paper drafted in July 2006 and finalised in August 2006
3. The implications paper produced in August 2006

The review is the work of officers and has not been formally considered by any authority. The findings of the review have been considered in the formulation of the draft 3 Cities SRS and the draft Northern SRS which will form part of the Regional Plan to be published on 28 September 2006 and tested at a public examination in 2007.

A project plan produced and agreed in December 2005 and added to in April 2006 have guided the review work.

The review has started from the point that the principle of the green belt is well established and will remain. However, the review is related to the needs of development in the areas where there is green belt at present.

General areas for possible extensions to the green belt have also been considered. The government's sustainable communities plan requires that the current area of green belt land within each region should be maintained or increased.

The working paper sets out for discussion key background material and development issues. The working paper was informed by a series of discussions with planning officers at all of the councils within the Nottingham-Derby green belt area, the March 2006 Nottinghamshire CPRE green belt conference, and a review of relevant documents. A draft of the working paper was sent to planning staff at councils and other key contacts in March 2006, and comments were considered prior to finalising the paper. The finalised paper was published on the EMRA website in April 2006.

Main points from the working paper were:

- The principles of sustainable development indicate a need to focus new development within existing urban areas and settlements. Given that not all new development needs up to 2026 will be able to be accommodated within these areas, land in sustainable locations will also be required, which may impact on land currently designated as green belt.
- The green belt was established to control urban form. There were green belt sketch plans in the 1950s, policies were set for statutory green belts in 1980, and then green belt plans were produced by Derbyshire (1983) and Nottinghamshire (1989).
- In Nottinghamshire the green belt sought to contain the growth of Nottingham and prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another. In Derbyshire, this was one of three (and later four) green belts. This south east Derbyshire green belt sought to prevent urban expansion in the Nottingham-Derby area and maintain the separate identity of smaller settlements. The principal purpose now is to prevent a tendency for Nottingham and Derby to merge with the settlements in between and surrounding.
- Local plans now identify the green belt boundaries. There have been some changes over time, which have tended to be contentious. Often councils have moved to few or no changes to the green belt after initially suggesting allocating green belt land for development.
- An increased re-use of urban land has minimised the need to amend the green belt, but changes will be required in providing for development up to 2026. A number of

Councils responded on the consultation document for the RSS review in January 2006 indicating a very cautious approach to growth.

- A key issue identified related to the green belt encircling Nottingham but only affecting part of Derby. The potential for sustainable urban extensions was identified. There is pressure for development all around Nottingham, while current pressures to expand Derby are greatest where there is no green belt designation.
- The potential to expand settlements within the green belt was also examined. The largest settlements are between Nottingham and Derby and the key issue is whether any expansion affects the main purpose of the green belt to separate the principal urban areas and the areas in between and surrounding. Settlements such as Belper, Heanor and Ripley have good sustainability credentials but there are local green belt issues as there is a tendency for these to merge. Other settlements were also identified as potential candidates for expansion, although the strategic significance of these would be limited given their small size.
- The outer boundary of the green belt has remained unchanged for over 20 years. Of all the boundaries, the main issue raised was over the appropriate width of the green belt to the south of Nottingham and Derby.

Meetings were held in May 2006 with representatives of CPRE (Campaign for the Protection of Rural England) and HBF (Home Builders Federation). The meetings discussed the issues raised in the working paper and outcomes that these two key stakeholders were seeking in relation to areas of green belt land. Written comments were also received from CPRE and GOEM (Government Office for the East Midlands) as well as some private developers about the working paper. Green belt issues were also discussed at the 3 Cities sub-regional stakeholder seminar in June 2006.

The assessment paper builds on the material in the working paper to analyse areas of land in relation to the purposes for green belts and the value of the land's contribution in terms of green infrastructure. Both areas within the existing green belt, and areas of potential extensions, are considered. A draft of the paper was sent to planning staff at councils and other key contacts in July 2006, and comments were considered prior to finalising the paper in August 2006.

Conclusions from the assessment paper are:

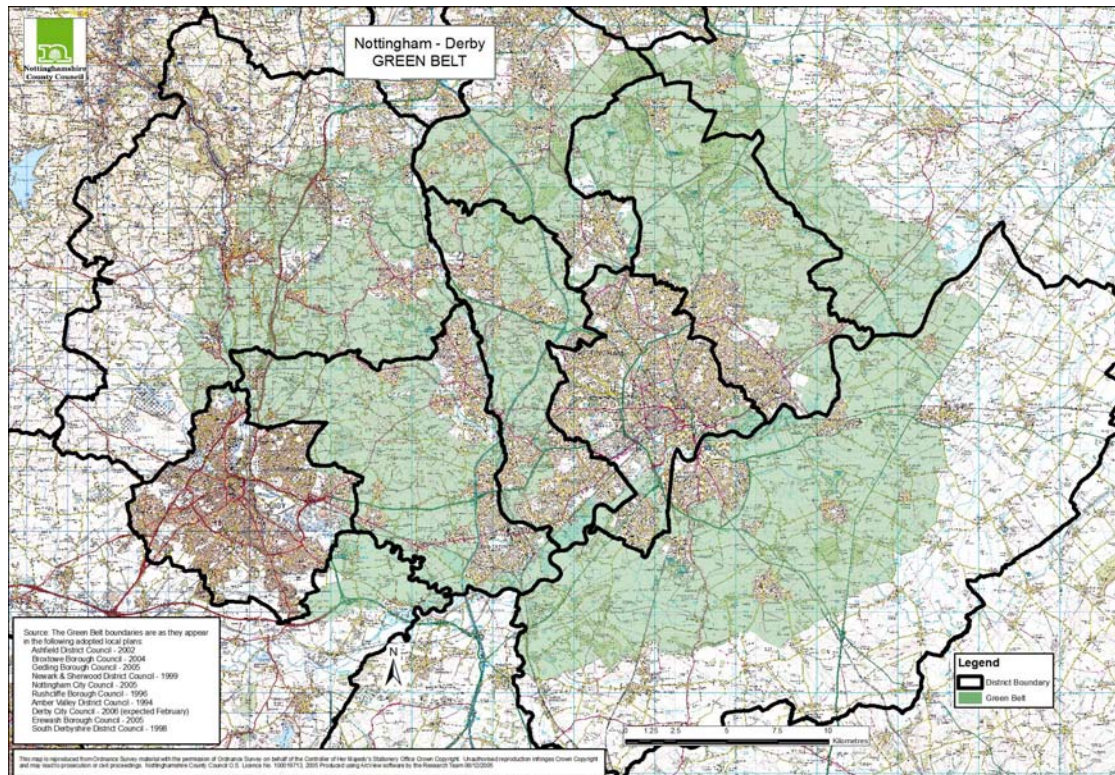
- The area immediately between Nottingham and Derby and the areas immediately north are generally the most important areas of green belt. South and east of Nottingham the green belt serves fewer of the purposes set out in PPG2 because while supporting the containment of the urban area it is not separating major areas of development.
- Areas for growth to the east and south of Nottingham might impact on the green belt less than the areas for growth to the west of Nottingham. Strong reasons would be needed for any growth impacting on the existing green belt east and north of Derby given the danger of settlement coalescence to the east and the high cultural and amenity value to the north.
- No possible extensions to the green belt score as highly in this analysis as the most important existing areas of green belt. However areas to the south of Long Eaton and immediately around Derby score similarly to the existing green belt areas to the south and east of Nottingham. While any decision to expand the green belt would be based on many factors, the analysis indicates that a green belt south of Long Eaton into North West Leicestershire and around Derby further into South Derbyshire District could meet a number of green belt purposes.

The final paper considers the implications in relation to the green belt of the growth strategies for each Housing Market Area in the draft 3 Cities SRS. This was produced in August 2006 at the same time as the policies for the draft SRS were being finalised.

Conclusions from the implications paper are:

- The strategies contained within the SRS have been prepared taking into account the outcomes of the green belt review and are broadly consistent with it.
  - The strategies do not rule out the possibility of needing to release green belt land in Broxtowe, Erewash and Gedling even though the green belt review indicates that the green belt is particularly important in these areas. Recognition of the importance of the green belt is however reflected in the relatively low housing provision levels in these areas.
  - Growth in Heanor, Belper, Ripley and Alfreton has the potential to impact on the green belt. Given the remoteness from Nottingham and Derby, minor releases of green belt land will not have strategic significance, but local issues will need to be carefully considered.
  - Extending Nottingham to the south (within Rushcliffe Borough) and Derby to the south (within South Derbyshire District) recognises that these areas either contain less important green belt land than elsewhere, or have no green belt at all. South of Derby the green belt review assesses the potential for a green belt at about the same level of importance as current areas of green belt south of Nottingham.
  - Extending the green belt into North West Leicestershire and further into South Derbyshire is not intended to impact on important areas identified for growth. Local study will need to be undertaken between Councils and in consultation with interested parties in order to define appropriate defensible boundaries.
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# Nottingham-Derby Green Belt Review



## Working Paper

Lynette Hughes  
Nottinghamshire County Council  
and  
Steve Buffery  
Derbyshire County Council  
19 April 2006

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# WORKING PAPER

## Introduction

1. This working paper is intended to set out for discussion key background material and issues in respect of the Nottingham-Derby green belt review.

## A Comprehensive Review

### Regional Spatial Strategy

2. The East Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS8) approved in March 2005, requires a strategic review of the Nottingham-Derby green belt. Policy 14 sets out the components for the review, while Policy 16 makes it clear that the review will be within the context of a sub-regional strategy for the Three Cities Sub-area.
3. While the review will identify the case for adding land or removing land from the green belt, the starting point is that the green belt will remain. The Nottingham-Derby green belt is not just an effective strategic planning tool; it is widely supported by the public because it is understood to protect the countryside.
4. The Three Cities sub-regional strategy (3 Cities SRS) is being prepared to form part of the RSS8 review. The current timeframe for the RSS8 review envisages a draft Regional Plan being released for public consultation in September 2006.
5. In October 2005 'Options for Change', an options document about the Regional Plan was released for public consultation. Responses to that document help inform the green belt review.

### Policy 14

#### The Nottingham-Derby Green Belt

The principle of the Nottingham Derby Green Belt is well established and should be maintained.

A strategic review of the Nottingham-Derby Green Belt will be undertaken in relation to development requirements arising in this part of the Three Cities Sub-Area up to 2026. The review will take into account:

- the sequential approach to development outlined in Policies 2 and 3;
- the wider principles and purpose of existing Green Belt designations as set out in PPG2; and
- the case for adding land to or removing land from the Green Belt.

### Policy 16

#### A Sub-Regional Spatial Strategy for the Three Cities Sub-area

The Regional Planning Body, working with the relevant local authorities, emda and other interested bodies should develop a Sub Regional Spatial Strategy for the Three Cities Sub-area as part of the next RSS Review.

The Strategy should contain long term policies and proposals that will promote:

- sustainable patterns of development and movement within and between the three Principal Urban Areas and other settlements within the Sub-area and beyond;
- the use of public transport for both local and inter-urban movements;
- an improvement to the quality of the environment, including the provision of semi-natural green space in urban areas;
- an improvement to the collective economic performance of the sub-area and a reduction in deprivation;
- an approach to optimising the economic benefits of Nottingham East Midlands Airport consistent with sustainable patterns of development and movement; and
- a consideration of the extent of Green Belt designations consistent with PPG2 and Policies 2 and 3

## Sequential Approach to Development

6. Policy 14 RSS8 identifies that the green belt review will take into account the sequential approach to development as identified in Policies 2 and 3 of RSS8. These policies set out the basic approach to identifying land for development. The 'Options for Change' document sought comment on whether there is any need for change in respect of these policies.

### Policy 2

#### Locational Priorities for Development

In order to meet the objectives set out in Policy 1 and ensure the most sustainable mix of locations within, adjoining and outside of urban areas, a sequential approach to the selection of land for development should be adopted in Development Plans and Local Development Frameworks in accordance with the following priority order:

- a) suitable previously developed sites and buildings within urban areas that are or will be well served by public transport;
- b) other suitable locations within urban areas not identified as land to be protected for amenity purposes;
- c) suitable sites in locations adjoining urban areas, which are or will be well served by public transport, particularly where this involves the use of previously developed land; and
- d) suitable sites in locations outside of (that is not adjoining) urban areas, which are or will be well served by public transport, particularly where this involves the use of previously developed land.

### Policy 3

#### Sustainability Criteria

In order to assess the suitability of land for development, in accordance with Policy 2 above, the nature of the development and its locational requirements will need to be taken into account along with all of the following criteria:

- the availability and location of previously developed land and vacant or under-used buildings;
- the accessibility of development sites by non-car modes and the potential to improve such accessibility to town centres, employment, shops and services;
- the capacity of existing infrastructure, including the highway network, public transport, utilities and social infrastructure (such as schools and hospitals) to absorb further development;
- physical constraints on the development of land, including, for example, the level of contamination, stability and flood risk;
- the impact that the development of sites will have on the region's natural resources, environmental and cultural assets and the health of local people;
- the likelihood that the site can be viably developed, taking into account the availability of resources (both public and private); and
- the suitability of sites for mixed use development and the contribution that development might make to strengthening local communities.

7. Future stages of the green belt review will address the sequential approach to development in greater detail once decisions have been taken by the East Midlands Regional Assembly on what the scale of growth for the region will be.

## Baker Associates Report 1999

8. In 1999, consultants Baker Associates were commissioned by the then East Midlands Local Government Association and the Government Office of the East Midlands (GOEM) to develop an approach to how the Nottingham-Derby green belt could take into account the principles of sustainable development. RSS8 refers to the need to take into account the conclusions of their report: 'The Sustainability Assessment of the Nottingham-Derby Green Belt'.
9. The report sets out conclusions about the purposes of the green belt, relationship of green belt policy to the objectives of sustainable development, and the configuration of the green belt. In relation to how a review of the green belt might be undertaken, Baker Associates proposed that the identification of locations for development outside of the urban areas should follow a process concerned with opportunity, impact and contribution.

10. The Baker report provides a number of conclusions and recommendations on the present configuration of the Nottingham-Derby green belt. The main conclusions are that:

- The main intent of the green belt is to prevent development taking place between Nottingham and Derby but the extent of the green belt is greater than is required for this purpose and it serves to prevent peripheral development to the north, east and south of Nottingham, and north of Derby;
- There is no green belt in Leicestershire but there are locations which are as close to the periphery of Nottingham as other locations which are designated as green belt;
- In seeking locations for development associated with Nottingham and Derby there are areas which according to sustainable development criteria, and the Government's policy guidance on residential development, should be favoured but which are within the green belt.

11. The main recommendations are that:

- In establishing the distribution of the future development requirement between sub-areas in the Region, and in identifying the role of the major urban areas, regional planning guidance should not be inhibited by the existence of the Nottingham-Derby green belt;
- Regional planning guidance should make it clear that land within green belt should be examined in seeking locations for out of settlement development according to similar criteria as land outside green belt;
- Regional planning guidance should encourage planning authorities to promote a strong, positive and creative approach to development on the edge of urban areas, encompassing matters such as increasing residential densities, strengthening links with extended and new movement networks, and creating a strategic network of open land with established access agreements.

## **PPG2**

12. The Planning Policy Guidance Note 2 on green belts dating from 1995 (PPG2) is the starting point for any green belt review. Paragraphs 1.4 and 1.5 describe the importance of green belts and why land might be included in them.

1.4 The fundamental aim of green belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the most important attribute of green belts is their openness. Green belts can shape patterns of urban development at sub-regional and regional scale, and help to ensure that development occurs in locations allocated in development plans. They help to protect the countryside, be it in agricultural, forestry or other use. They can assist in moving towards more sustainable patterns of urban development

1.5 There are five purposes of including land in green belts:

- check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;



- to prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another;
- to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

13. The review must examine the current green belt against the purposes of the green belt set out in PPG2 above. Other key points from PPG2 in respect of this strategic review are:

- Green belts are characterised by their permanence – their protection should be maintained as far as can be seen ahead
- Wherever practical the green belt should be several miles wide
- Sustainable patterns of development should be promoted
- The general area where land may need to be ‘safeguarded’ for future development should be identified following consideration of the broad location of anticipated development

## **PPS1**

14. Planning Policy Statement 1 sets out the Government’s planning policies on the delivery of sustainable development through the planning system. The PPS sets out a number of key objectives for the delivery of sustainable development in development plans, which include:

- Promoting sustainable economic growth to support efficient, competitive and innovative business, commercial and industrial sectors;
- Promoting urban and rural regeneration to improve the wellbeing of communities, improve facilities, promote high quality and safe development and create new opportunities for people living in those communities;
- Bringing forward sufficient land of a suitable quality in appropriate locations to meet the expected needs for housing, for industrial development, for the exploitation of raw materials, for retail and commercial development, and for leisure and recreation, taking into account issues such as accessibility and sustainable transport needs, the provision of infrastructure, including sustainable waste management, and the need to avoid flood risk and other natural hazards;
- Providing improved access for all to jobs, health, education, shops, leisure and community facilities, open space, sport and recreation by ensuring that new development is located where everyone can access services or facilities on foot, bicycle or public transport;
- Focusing developments that attract a large number of people, especially retail, leisure and office development, in existing centres to promote their vitality and viability;
- Reducing the need to travel and encouraging accessible public transport provision to secure more sustainable patterns of transport development.
- Promoting the efficient use of land through higher density, mixed-use development and the use of suitably located previously developed land and buildings;
- Enhancing as well as protecting biodiversity, natural habitats, the historic environment and landscape and townscape character.

## PPG3

15. Planning Policy Guidance Note 3 sets out the Government's policies for housing development. A new Draft Planning Policy Statement 3 on housing was issued for consultation in December 2005. The Government's main planning policy objectives for housing are:
- To ensure that a wide choice of housing types is available for both affordable and market housing to meet the needs of all members of the community;
  - To deliver a better balance between housing demand and supply in every housing market and to improve affordability where necessary;
  - To create sustainable, inclusive, mixed communities in all areas. Housing developments should be attractive, safe and designed and built to a high quality. Housing should be located in areas with good access to jobs, key services and infrastructure.
16. Central to the provision of new housing is the sequential approach to identifying sites for housing development. First preference should be for the re-use of previously developed land and buildings within urban areas; then urban extensions; and finally new development around nodes in good transport corridors.

## Sustainable Communities

17. The government set out its long term plan of action for delivering sustainable communities in its Sustainable Communities Plan in 2003. The plan sets out funding for a 'step change' in housing supply and new growth areas. Of particular significance to this green belt review it also guarantees to protect green belts, with a target for each region to maintain or increase the current area of land designated as green belt. The statements about protecting the countryside are copied here. In accordance with the government's requirements as set out in the Sustainable Communities Plan, this review must consider extensions of the green belt given that some existing green belt land might be affected by development.

### Protecting the countryside

*4.10 We will protect the countryside through a target for each region to maintain or increase the current area of land designated as green belt land in local plans. We will use green belt and countryside protection tools to maintain the openness of the countryside around areas of growth and prevent urban sprawl. Designated areas such as National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty will continue to enjoy the greatest level of protection afforded by the planning system.*

*4.11 We will enhance greenbelt land by encouraging local authorities to identify ways to raise its quality and utility, for example by improving its accessibility, biodiversity and amenity value.*

*4.12 We will promote more and better publicly accessible green space in and around our communities, for example through the creation of new country parks and networks of green spaces within towns and cities. 'Green wedges' and 'green corridors' will be given further protection through the planning system.*

*4.13 We will encourage regional and local partners, especially in the growth areas and low demand pathfinders, to replicate the success of the 12 Community Forests around our major towns and cities. These forests give communities access to green spaces and woodlands right on the urban doorstep, and help protect and improve the countryside. They also help boost economic confidence and investment.*

## Summary of Issues

18. This review of the Nottingham-Derby green belt needs to reconcile the aims of the RSS in providing for new development in the Three Cities sub-area up to 2026 within

the context of the locational principles of sustainable development embodied in PPS1 and PPG3 with the need to define a green belt that meets the requirements of green belt policy as set out in PPG2.

19. Guided by the principles of sustainable development, new development in the sub-area is likely to be focussed within existing urban areas and settlements. However, it is likely that not all new development needs up to 2026 will be able to be accommodated within existing urban areas, so land in sustainable locations on the edge of urban areas and settlements may also be required for new development. This may impact on land which is currently designated as green belt.

## Historical Context

### Nottinghamshire

20. The sketch plan green belt for Nottinghamshire was produced in 1956, only a short time after the 'Green Belts' circular 42/55. The sketch plan green belt sought to contain the growth of Nottingham and to prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another. The sketch plan green belt was largely the same shape as it is today. It surrounded the Nottingham conurbation for a distance of between 8 kilometres (five miles) to the east and south and 12 kilometres (seven miles) to the north. To the west, it extended up to the County boundary with Derbyshire and Leicestershire where it met with the sketch plan green belt for south-east Derbyshire.
21. The sketch plan green belt proposals were never formally submitted to the Minister for approval. The preparation of the County's first structure plan in the 1970s provided the framework for a statutory green belt.
22. The County proposed an extension beyond the sketch plan outer boundaries on the basis that it would discourage commuting from settlements by resisting pressure for development there. Following the Examination in Public, the Secretary of State did not accept that it was necessary to extend beyond sketch plan green belt boundaries to the south and east. The Secretary of State however accepted that a green belt encircling Nottingham be approved, in the interests of preventing coalescence and containing the growth of the city. The outer boundaries would broadly coincide with that of the sketch plan green belt.
23. The inner boundary of the green belt was another area of controversy considered at the Examination in Public. The Secretary of State agreed with the Panel that a clearly recognisable, permanent and firmly defended inner boundary was vital. The inner boundary includes the developed areas in Nottingham City, Arnold, Carlton, West Bridgford, Beeston and Stapleford.
24. It was accepted that infill housing would be permitted in many of the villages of the green belt. The towns and villages excluded from the sketch plan green belt would also be excluded from the approved green belt and the precise boundaries of those settlements would be defined at the local plan stage.
25. The relevant part of the resulting policy 16.28 in the 1980 Structure Plan was as follows:

The inner boundary of the green belt will be drawn as near as practicable to development, including that provided for in the Structure Plan up to 1996. The depth of the green belt will be approximately 11 kilometres to the north (excluding Annesley Woodhouse), 9 kilometres to the east (excluding Bingham), 7 kilometres to the south (excluding East Leake) and to the County boundary to the west. The following settlements are excluded from the green belt: Hucknall, Kimberley, Awsworth, Eastwood, Brinsley, Jacksdale, Underwood, Selston, Ravenshead, Blidworth, Calverton, Woodborough, Lambley, Burton Joyce, Lowdham, Ruddington, Radcliffe-on-Trent, Cotgrave, Keyworth, Cropwell Bishop, Tollerton and East Bridgford. Infill housing development on a limited scale will be permitted in some settlements within the green belt. These will be identified in Local Plans.

26. The Deposit Draft Nottinghamshire Green Belt Local Plan was produced in 1982 and objections were considered at an inquiry in 1983. The local plan was finally adopted in 1989. The local plan was in accordance with the 1980 Structure Plan policy, and

defined detailed boundaries as well as setting out policies for the control of development within the green belt. The text of the local plan identified where changes were made from the sketch plan green belt. Alterations were made to the outer boundary for three reasons:

- a) To provide a line that is defensible and follows distinct features on the ground wherever possible
- b) To enable necessary development in the Mansfield-Ashfield area
- c) To accord with the boundary of the South East Derbyshire green belt

27. The Green Belt local plan was generally incorporated without amendment into the first local plans of local authorities, but has been amended in local plan reviews.

## **Derbyshire**

28. The origin of green belts in Derbyshire dates back to the late 1950s when three green belts were provisionally defined.

29. The three Derbyshire green belts were originally defined in consultation with neighbouring authorities to prevent continuing urban expansion in the areas adjoining Manchester and Sheffield and in the Derby-Nottingham area, whilst maintaining the separate identity of the smaller settlements.

30. The 1980 Derbyshire Structure Plan reaffirmed the need for green belts in these three areas and included proposals for a fourth green belt in South Derbyshire. In approving the 1980 Structure Plan the Secretary of State designated a new South Derbyshire Green Belt to cover the open countryside between Swadlincote and Burton-upon-Trent.

31. Green belt local plans were subsequently prepared and adopted for South and South East Derbyshire, North East Derbyshire and North West Derbyshire.

32. The South and South East Derbyshire Green Belts Local Plan was adopted in April 1983. The Plan notes that the first green belt proposals for South East Derbyshire were provisionally drawn up in 1955. The green belt was defined between Derby and Nottingham and northwards up the Erewash Valley, around Long Eaton, Ilkeston, Heanor and Ripley. The area covered by this provisional green belt was modified on a number of occasions in 1957, 1961 and 1968 when part of the green belt was deleted within the extended boundary of Derby County Borough. Prior to the adoption of the Green Belt local plan in 1983, the Provisional South East Derbyshire Green Belt was never formally submitted for Ministerial approval but was adopted by the local planning authorities and used as a basis for the control of development.

33. The 1980 Derbyshire Structure Plan emphasised the importance of maintaining the green belts. In its review of green belt policies, the Plan concluded that without strong planning controls there was still a danger of a major conurbation emerging between Derby, Nottingham and the towns of the Erewash Valley. The Structure Plan therefore reaffirmed the need for green belt in the area covered by the Provisional South East Derbyshire Green Belt and proposed that it should be extended between Derby and Belper, and between Belper and the Derby/Kilburn area. At the same time a small area of the Provisional Green Belt at Pinxton was deleted.

34. The Green Belts local plan notes that in 1955 when green belt proposals were first considered for Derbyshire, the area between Swadlincote and Burton-upon-Trent was examined but not confirmed as Provisional Green Belt as it was considered that the area was too small in extent. Subsequently, however, a policy was pursued of resisting development in the open countryside between the two towns.
35. The Burton and Swadlincote Study was prepared in 1974 by Derbyshire County Council and reaffirmed the policy of keeping the area open and used the term 'green wedge' to define it. The Structure Plan submitted to the Secretary of State in 1977 showed Swadlincote and Burton separated by a 'green wedge'. The Panel at the Examination in Public, however, considered that the importance of maintaining the open nature of these areas was sufficiently great to justify a green belt definition. In approving the 1980 Structure Plan the Secretary of State designated a new South Derbyshire Green Belt to cover the open countryside between Swadlincote and Burton-upon-Trent.
36. The South and South East Derbyshire Green Belts local plan was subsequently prepared and adopted in April 1983 and defines the detailed extent of green belt in the area. The Plan sought to establish green belt boundaries with a reasonable degree of permanence and so in some areas the boundaries needed to be defined to accommodate anticipated urban development needs. The Plan identified that, whilst green belts established a generally restrictive attitude to urban development in the countryside, some new development in the form of homes, schools, industries, shops and recreational facilities would be essential in the future, particularly around the larger towns such as Derby, Ripley, Heanor, Belper, Ilkeston, Long Eaton and Swadlincote. Consequently, in these areas the green belt boundaries were defined so as to make an adequate allowance for urban development needs established in the Structure Plan and where necessary looked beyond the Structure Plan period.
37. The Green Belts local plan indicates that the small towns and villages of various sizes were divided into two categories. The larger settlements with a generally built-up character where some development might be anticipated in the future were generally excluded from the green belt, in 'envelopes'. The smaller villages and settlements where development would be strictly controlled were 'washed over' or wholly included within the green belt.
38. The Green Belts local plan notes that the South East Derbyshire Green Belt had been matched since the mid 1950s by a similar green belt in Nottinghamshire. The two green belts shared a common boundary along the River Erewash for a distance of some 20 miles from Pye Bridge in the north, to Long Eaton and the River Trent in the south.
39. The local plan notes that in preparing the proposals for the green belt boundary on the eastern boundary with Nottinghamshire care had been taken to ensure that the boundary was properly related to the corresponding Nottinghamshire Green Belt, which was incorporated in the 1980 Nottinghamshire Structure Plan. The Green Belt local plan notes that the Nottinghamshire planning authorities had been requested to define their green belt boundaries to complement, as far as possible, the proposals in the Green Belt local plan.
40. The local plan defined the extent and purpose of the green belt in the following locations:
  13. The North-West Boundary – Quarndon to Pye Bridge
  14. The Eastern Boundary with Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire

- 15. The Southern Boundary – Long Eaton to Chellaston
  - 16. Derby
  - 17. The Amber Valley Towns – Belper, Ripley and Heanor
  - 18. The Erewash Towns – Ilkeston and Long Eaton
  - 19. Amber Valley Villages
  - 20. The Erewash Villages
  - 21. The South Derbyshire Villages
41. The general location of the green belt in south and south-east Derbyshire remained largely unchanged from that defined in the Green Belts local plan in subsequent adopted versions of the Structure Plan in 1990 and 2001.

### **Summary of context**

42. The green belt was established to control urban form.
43. The sketch plan green belt developed for Nottinghamshire in the 1950s sought to contain the growth of Nottingham and prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another
44. The South East Derbyshire green belt was one of three green belts defined in Derbyshire in the 1950s. This green belt sought to prevent urban expansion in the Derby-Nottingham area and maintain the separate identity of smaller settlements.
45. The County Councils formally defined the green belts in the 1980s, having consulted one another to ensure a continuous boundary.
46. Both green belts were established with boundaries drawn close to existing development.
47. The green belt has historically been limited to Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire. Leicestershire does not have any green belt land.
48. The northern edge of the green belt has deliberately excluded Mansfield and towns to the west of it so as not to constrain development (and more latterly regeneration) in those areas.

## **Existing Development Plan Documents**

### **Nottinghamshire Structure Plan**

49. The Nottinghamshire and Nottingham Joint Structure Plan (NNJSP) was adopted on 16 February 2006. It covers the period 2001 to 2021. Part of Policy 1/2 has required a review of green belt boundaries in respect of local plans being prepared for the period up to 2021.

**Local Plans/local development documents for areas covered by the Green Belt will review its boundaries to meet the development land requirements of the Joint Structure Plan to 2021. In this review of Green Belt boundaries Local Planning Authorities will have regard to:**

- i) Sustainable development principles and the sequential approach to development;**
- ii) The principles and purposes of existing Green Belt land, in particular the need to maintain openness and prevent coalescence;**
- iii) The retention of existing, or definition of new, defensible boundaries.**

50. The Panel report in October 2004 from the Examination in Public supported Policy 1/2 noting that most affected districts had recently reviewed their green belt boundaries and that Rushcliffe Borough was still required to complete a review for their local plan review. The Panel commented that reviews of the green belt at the local level pursuant to this structure plan should be 'conservative in nature, deleting for the time being only such land as is necessary to provide for identified development needs'.
51. The Panel's comment that local reviews should be conservative stems from the regional policy requirement for the strategic green belt review. The Panel commented that this strategic review should be 'radical' as well as 'full and comprehensive'. It was recognised that the application of the sequential approach to allocating land for development (embodied in government policy) could on occasion be fundamentally at odds with the concept of keeping land permanently open in a green belt. The Panel commented that the 'fundamental tensions exposed' between the sequential approach and the green belt concept 'can only be resolved at a regional level as the Regional Spatial Strategy re-examines the future needs for development across the whole of the area'.
52. The NNJSP does not contain any direct reference to the need for safeguarded land. The Panel commented that 'in the light of the forthcoming strategic review of the green belt we do not believe that there is currently a need for safeguarded land to be identified through the plan'. Instead, the Panel suggested that this matter should also be addressed through the RSS review process.



## Derbyshire Structure Plan

53. The Derby and Derbyshire Joint Structure Plan (DDJSP) was adopted in January 2001 and covers the period up to 2011. In the context of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the adopted Structure Plan has a 'saved period' of three years up to September 2007. No further review is proposed to the adopted Plan.
54. General Development Strategy Policy 6 of the adopted Plan sets out the policy for the general location of green belts in Derbyshire.

### **General Development Strategy Policy 6: General Location of Green Belts**

**Green belt policies will be operated in the following general locations subject to detailed boundaries being determined in local plans:**

- 1) South-east Derbyshire: Between Derby and the Nottinghamshire boundary, from Chellaston and Shardlow in the south and as far north as Belper and Riddings**
- 2) South Derbyshire: between Swadlincote and Burton-on-Trent**
- 3) North-east Derbyshire: between Chesterfield and the Peak District National Park boundary, Chesterfield and the South Yorkshire boundary as far east as Barlborough and between Chesterfield and Wingerworth**
- 4) North-west Derbyshire: northwards from Whaley Bridge between the boundaries of the Peak District National Park, Cheshire, Stockport and Tameside.**

55. The adopted Plan notes that the inclusion of the general extent of green belts in the 1980 and 1990 Structure Plans, the adoption of the Green Belt local plans for South, South-East, North-East and North-West Derbyshire and their inclusion, without major alterations, in district-wide local plans exemplified the extent to which green belts had been both popular and successful in resisting undesirable pressure from urban development in those parts of Derbyshire.
56. The Plan notes that, whilst the construction of the A50 south of Derby has changed patterns of accessibility in recent years, the general location of the areas in Derbyshire most vulnerable to development pressures have not changed greatly - the conurbations adjacent to the County boundary still being the source of the strongest of such pressures.
57. In the context of the regional planning guidance at the time (RPG8), consideration was given in the preparation of the Plan to the need for a strategic review of green belts in the context of developing strategic development proposals in all the existing green belt areas. In the light of this work it was decided that green belt policy should continue to be applied to the broad areas set out in the 1990 Structure Plan. The Plan recognises, however, that detailed alterations to green belt boundaries may be necessary when local plans seek to make site-specific land allocations, for example, south-east of Derby, in the Cinderhill area east of Belper, north of Heanor between the town and A610 and south of Ilkeston. These possible detailed changes did not, however, require changes to the wording of the Structure Plan's policy on the general extent of Green Belts, which remained unchanged from the 1990 Structure Plan.
58. In the context of PPG2, consideration was also given in the preparation of the Plan to the need to provide 'safeguarded land' between the built-up areas and the green belt to meet longer-term development needs, particularly in the area adjacent to the South-East Derbyshire green belt. The evaluation of development options for the

relevant sub-areas considered this aspect of development needs alongside other factors. It was concluded that the policy in these areas was such that it would be unlikely to affect green belts enough to require changes to the wording of the Structure Plan's policy on their general location or the designation of safeguarded land. No policy statement on safeguarded land therefore appears in the adopted Plan.

## **Amber Valley**

59. The eastern, central and southern parts of Amber Valley Borough are within the Nottingham-Derby green belt. The Borough contains the main settlements of Alfreton, Belper, Heanor and Ripley. All of the urban area of Alfreton is located outside and to the north of the green belt. Belper, Heanor and Ripley are within green belt envelopes. In Belper, the area to the north, west and south-west of the town is included within a Special Landscape Area.
60. The Amber Valley Local Plan has been under review since 2001. The First Deposit local plan proposed a number of limited amendments to the green belt boundary within the Borough. The main proposed change was the deletion of land within the green belt at Cinderhill, Denby to help facilitate the provision of a comprehensive mixed use development scheme including 35 ha of employment development and 600 dwellings to help meet the employment and housing requirements of the adopted Structure Plan. The deletion of the land from the green belt was also considered to be justified on the basis that it would enable a sufficient scale of development to ensure remediation of derelict and contaminated land, the provision of new infrastructure, the delivery of a wide range of community benefits and to ensure a pattern and mix of land uses consistent with the principles of sustainable development.
61. Other deletions of land from the green belt were proposed in conjunction with the identification of land for new housing development at Hardy Barn, Heanor again to help meet the adopted Structure Plan requirement for the Heanor Sub-Area. This proposed amendment was deleted, however, in the Revised Deposit Plan as other sites outside the green belt were considered to be more appropriate.
62. The Plan also proposed the extension of the green belt in three areas including land between Codnor and Waingroves previously protected by an Area of Local Landscape Significance; land at Taylor Lane, Loscoe, which was taken out of the green belt in the adopted local plan and identified for new business development but for which a smaller area of land was identified in the Deposit Plan; and at Codnor Gate Industrial Estate where a small area of land was included as green belt to reflect more clearly defined features on the ground.
63. One of the main issues in the local plan review, has been proposals for the scale of new housing development in the Belper/Ripley Sub-Area and Derby Sub-Area. Because of the constraints of green belt and countryside in the Derby Sub-Area, the local plan review (Revised Deposit) proposed to provide for the majority of the remaining Structure Plan housing requirement for the Derby Sub-Area within the adjoining Belper/Ripley Sub-Area, predominantly at Cinderhill where 600 dwellings were proposed. In his consideration of this issue in the local plan inquiry, however, the inspector concluded that the large under provision of housing development in the Derby Sub-Area was not in conformity with the adopted Structure Plan and it was not

acceptable therefore for this lack of provision to be provided for within the Belper / Ripley Sub-Area.

64. With regard to the Derby Sub-Area, the inspector concluded that, as the lack of provision of housing land in the Derby Sub-Area was not in conformity with the JSP, it would be necessary for the Borough Council to revisit the Derby Sub-Area in the search for new allocations of housing land to meet the JSP requirement.
65. On the Cinderhill issue, the inspector concluded that it was only within the context of the requirement to meet the DDJSP housing requirement that the local plan should consider the Cinderhill proposal. The implication of this was that further large housing developments in Belper and the coalescence of settlements in the Ripley area should be avoided and that this should not involve the transfer of the Structure Plan housing requirement from the Derby Sub-Area.
66. In conclusion on Cinderhill, the inspector states that he did not believe the element of housing had been justified by the evidence, either in terms of the need for 600 houses as opposed to any other number, or at all in terms of achieving a balanced sustainable community. He recommended, however, that the policy for Cinderhill should be reviewed and further consideration given to reducing the scale of the proposal, minimising the need for greenfield and green belt land take.
67. These issues have been addressed in Proposed Modifications to the local plan. In accordance with the inspector's recommendations, the Proposed Modifications (2005) proposes the allocation of a site to the west of the green belt at Radbourne Lane, Mackworth on the periphery of Derby for 600 dwellings to help meet the remaining Structure Plan requirement. At Cinderhill, the Proposed Modifications proposes a reduced scale of development to provide for 300 dwellings and a smaller area of employment land, with a consequent reduction in land take from the green belt.

## **Ashfield**

68. The green belt extends over the southern half of Ashfield, with the settlements of Hucknall, Selston, Underwood, Jacksdale and Annesley / Kirkby Woodhouse / Annesley Woodhouse excluded. Significant employment areas such as the Sherwood Business Park, and the former Annesley colliery are also excluded from the green belt. Villages 'washed over' by the green belt include Bagthorpe, Lower Bagthorpe, Middlebrook and New Bagthorpe.
69. The northern boundary of the green belt ends on the outskirts of Kirkby-in-Ashfield. The urban areas of Kirkby-in-Ashfield and Sutton-in-Ashfield therefore lie entirely outside of the green belt.
70. The district council undertook a review of green belt boundaries for the current local plan to provide for development up to 2011 and rectify anomalies in existing boundaries. To a large extent, these amendments were accepted and included in the 2002 adopted local plan.
71. The Housing roundtable session at the public inquiry on the local plan in 2001 discussed whether there was a need to safeguard land for further development. A number of objectors had sought to have large areas of additional land, mainly in the Hucknall area, set aside for potential future housing and employment development

beyond the plan period. The inspector agreed with the Council that it was not appropriate to identify safeguarded land given that there was uncertainty about the strategic direction of growth post 2011. The local plan therefore does not include any land identified as safeguarded for future development.

## **Broxtowe**

72. Broxtowe is situated to the west of Nottingham City. Excluded from the green belt are Beeston and Stapleford (contiguous with Nottingham City's built up area); and Kimberley, Eastwood Awworth, Trowell and Brinsley. The green belt extends over the remainder of the district. At the last review of the local plan, adopted in September 2004, no significant changes to the green belt boundaries were made.
73. The initial strategy in the deposit draft of the local plan in 2000 was to remove a small number of sizeable areas of land from the green belt for housing or employment purposes. This strategy was preferred to the only perceived alternative of removing a larger number of small areas in order to meet structure plan requirements.
74. By the time of the local plan inquiry, Broxtowe council was no longer supporting all of the proposed green belt releases, although they still proposed one major mixed use development at Watnall. The inspector in 2003 recommended against this and the recommendation was accepted by Council.
75. The inspector recommended that three small sites be removed from the green belt for housing development. One was at Awworth and two at Kimberley. The Council did not accept these recommendations and instead found non green belt land to meet the lower housing allocations by then agreed in the regional planning guidance and structure plan review.
76. The inspector commented that frequent reviews of green belt boundaries detract from the characteristic of green belt permanency. Broxtowe did not seek to safeguard any land from the green belt to cater for a longer term than the current local plan. This regional review of the green belt, required by RSS8, fulfils the inspector's perceived need for a strategic review.

## **Derby City**

77. Within the City boundary small areas of green belt define the edge of the urban area to the north, east and south-east. The City of Derby Local Plan 1998 incorporated no significant amendments to the green belt area within the City boundary. The Plan also defined 13 green wedges throughout the City, which are areas of open land which penetrate the urban area from the countryside and which perform an important role in defining urban form and community identity within the City.
78. Green belt and green wedge boundaries were re-examined as part of the local plan review. The First Deposit plan concluded that although green belt and green wedge boundaries were re-examined with respect to the need for new development, for the most part it was considered that there was no need to alter them. Proposed Modifications to the Plan published in September 2005 and the subsequent adopted plan in January 2006 incorporated no changes to the defined green belt and green wedge boundaries.

79. As part of the local plan review, the most recent housing land availability information for the City suggests that substantially more brownfield land than was anticipated is now coming forward within the City for development. In this context, in its comments on the Amber Valley Local Plan Proposed Modifications, the City Council has indicated that the remaining Structure Plan housing requirement for the Amber Valley part of the Derby Sub-Area (about 260 dwellings after taking into account the proposed 600 dwellings proposed at Radbourne Lane, Mackworth) is more than offset by land supply within Derby City, where a significant over-provision of housing is forecast compared to the Structure Plan requirement.

## **Erewash**

80. Erewash Borough is situated between the two cities of Nottingham and Derby entirely within the green belt. It contains the two main settlements of Ilkeston and Long Eaton to the north-east and south-east of the Borough. Both of these settlements are 'inset' within the Nottingham-Derby green belt. The majority of the smaller settlements such as Breaston, Draycott, Borrowash, Ockbrook, Breadsall, Little Eaton, West Hallam, Risley and Stanley are also 'inset' within the green belt. The green belt 'washes over' other rural villages such as Dale Abbey and Morley.
81. The 1994 Erewash Borough Local Plan defined three additional types of protected land including green wedges, small rural sites and urban fringe for land that was not in the green belt. The main area of green wedge was between Ilkeston and Kirk Hallam - an open break which maintains the separate identity of these settlements. Small rural sites were areas of open land between the green belt and defined village boundaries of Breadsall, Stanley and Sandiacre. The urban fringe protected areas were located on the edge of the urban areas of Long Eaton and Sandiacre.
82. The review of the local plan commenced in 2001. The First Deposit local plan proposed no major revisions to the general green belt boundaries in the Borough although it included some of the land formerly protected by other mechanisms as green belt. It also proposed an area of 10 ha of green belt land at Longmoor lane, Breaston for a new business park adjacent to the M1. Taking this land out of the green belt was considered unlikely to jeopardise the extent or function of the green belt, which at this location was wide and open between Breaston and Long Eaton. The allocation of the Longmoor Lane site was confirmed in the Second Deposit Plan but was deleted in Pre-Inquiry Changes. This was subsequently supported by the local plan inspector.
83. At the Local Plan inquiry the inspector considered the case for whether the local plan should include a detailed review of the green belt. He concluded, however, that he found there to be no compelling case for a review of the green belt in the Plan to provide for development needs beyond the Plan period and that such a review would pre-empt the strategic review of the green belt proposed to be undertaken in Regional Planning Guidance.
84. The other main issue considered by the inspector related to proposals in the local plan review to add areas of land to the proposed green belt. These areas primarily consisted of the three categories of protected open land included in the adopted local plan. One of these areas is the open area between Ilkeston and Kirk Hallam. The inspector, however, concluded that he was not convinced that the Council's reasons amounted to exceptional circumstances that necessitated the inclusion of all these areas in the green belt. He concluded therefore that the additions to the green belt

should not be made. This was accepted so the areas previously with local plan protection have no protective policies associated with them in the adopted Plan of July 2005.

## **Gedling**

85. Gedling contains Carlton and Arnold which are part of Nottingham's built up area, and other settlements such as Burton Joyce, Bestwood, Calverton and Ravenshead which are contained within envelopes excluded from the green belt. All the remaining land in the borough is in the green belt and there are several villages washed over by the green belt designation.
86. The deposit draft of the revised local plan in 2000 contained a number of proposals for amendments to the green belt. Significant areas of land were proposed to be removed from the green belt in order to meet structure plan requirements for housing and employment land. Some of these were no longer proposed by the time of the revised deposit draft in 2002. The inspector's report accepted the need for some land to be removed from the green belt and the recommendations were largely accepted. The largest allocation of land formerly in the green belt is at Gedling colliery / Chase farm.
87. Gedling Borough collected data on the services and character of each rural settlement and proposed changes to the categorisation of settlements. The settlement hierarchy was considered reasonable and justified by the inspector. Villages 'inset' from the green belt are Burton Joyce, Calverton, Ravenshead, Newstead and Bestwood – of these Newstead and Bestwood had previously been washed over. 'Washed over' villages with infill boundaries are Linby, Papplewick, Lambley and Woodborough – of these Lambley and Woodborough had previously been 'inset'. The inspector commented that Bestwood, Newstead and Woodborough have a similar size and range of facilities but accepted that 'the character and circumstances of Bestwood and Newstead are such that they would benefit from some limited development and diversification'. New housing allocations were also agreed for both Bestwood and Newstead.
88. The inspector made significant recommendations in respect of the need to safeguard land for future development. The inspector concluded that 'this local plan review should not attempt to limit the extent of the land to be released from the Green Belt to exactly, or even approximately, that which is needed for development until 2011'. Instead safeguarded land was 'needed to secure the longer-term security of the Green Belt boundaries now being determined'. While the Council had not proposed to safeguard land, a number of recommendations were made and accepted. Land was identified as safeguarded land at Redhill, Top Wighay Farm, Mapperley golf course, Bestwood, Ravenshead, Burton Joyce, and Calverton
89. The revised local plan was adopted in July 2005.

## **Newark & Sherwood**

90. The western edge of Newark & Sherwood District (about 10% of the land area) is in the Nottingham-Derby green belt. At the northern edge, the green belt serves to separate the villages of Rainworth and Blidworth. The southern edge of Rainworth abuts the green belt and Blidworth is 'inset'. Lowdham (east of the A6097), Bulcote and Gunthorpe are also within envelopes excluded from the green belt while other villages are 'washed over'.
91. Some amendments were made to the green belt boundary before the local plan was adopted in 1999. Land at Blidworth and Lowdham was removed from the green belt to provide for housing and employment needs in those localities.
92. The eastern outer boundary of the green belt in Newark and Sherwood has not changed since the Nottinghamshire Green Belt Local Plan of 1989. It follows features such as field boundaries as far east as Rainworth in the north and Thurgarton in the south.

## **Nottingham City**

93. There are only small areas of green belt in Nottingham City at some of the outer edges: around Clifton, near Strelley, north of Bulwell, and around the racecourse/Colwick Park.
94. The green belt was reviewed for the 1997 local plan. At the next review a change was proposed to accommodate a proposed extension to Greenwood Dale School, but this was no longer pursued by the Council at the time of the inquiry. No changes were therefore made to the green belt in the city at this time and the inspector concluded that it was appropriate not to further review the boundaries. The Nottingham local plan was adopted in November 2005.

## **Rushcliffe**

95. Rushcliffe is situated to the south east of Nottingham. It contains West Bridgford which is part of Nottingham's built up area, as well as the four large settlements of Radcliffe-on-Trent, Cotgrave, Keyworth and Ruddington, all of which are 'inset' from the green belt. A number of other settlements are 'washed over' by the green belt which extends for more than half the width of the district. Settlements outside of the green belt generally have a rural village character, with the exception of Bingham and East Leake which are larger settlements.
96. The deposit draft of the Rushcliffe Local Plan 2000 proposed the release of several green belt sites for housing and employment purposes. The village of Gotham was also proposed to be taken out of the green belt and extended.
97. The revised deposit draft 2004 made significant amendments reflecting RSS8 and the Examination in Public of the JSP replacement structure plan. Gotham was no longer proposed to be taken out of the green belt. However, some areas of green belt land were still required for housing and employment purposes. Land at Edwalton for a mixed use development of 1200 dwellings and employment involves the release of green belt land adjoining Nottingham's built up area. Smaller areas of land at Cotgrave and Radcliffe-on-Trent are proposed to be added to the green belt.

98. The inspector's report on the inquiry was released at the beginning of February 2006. The inspector recommends against the Edwalton allocation. Although accepting that this site performs well when analysing alternatives using a sequential approach to development, he raised a number of concerns including a concern that this would be a significant single deletion of green belt land in advance of the strategic review.
99. Instead of the Edwalton site, the inspector recommends that in relation to housing needs for the next 10 years, the Council looks at alternative sites. Suggested sites to consider include, on the inner edge of the green belt, the Melton Triangle (across Melton Road from the Edwalton site) and land at Wilford Lane (West Bridgford). Within the green belt land at Cotgrave (Hollygate Lane and colliery) is suggested. At Radcliffe-on-Trent (the Paddocks) an area of land that had been proposed to be added to the green belt in the revised deposit draft is suggested. Sites beyond the green belt at East Leake (Gotham Road), and Bingham (Tithby Road) are also suggested.

## **South Derbyshire**

100. The District of South Derbyshire is bounded by the City of Derby to the north, Burton-upon-Trent to the west and Ashby-de-le-Zouch to the east. The largest settlement in the area is Swadlincote, which is the main employment, shopping and service centre in the District. The rest of the District is predominantly rural in character. Extensive tracts of countryside are interspersed with a number of villages and settlements, some of which like Repton and Shardlow are of historic value. Melbourne is one of the larger villages along with Etwall, Linton, Hatton and Willington. The vast majority of the southern half of the District falls within the National Forest.
101. A small area of the Nottingham-Derby green belt washes over the north-east corner of the District, in an area bounded to the west by Derby City and to the north by Erewash Borough. A further area of green belt is located to the south-west of the District between Swadlincote and Burton-upon-Trent, which is intended to prevent the coalescence of these settlements. The main development within the area of the Nottingham-Derby green belt in recent years has been the construction of the A50 Derby Southern Bypass and Derby Spur, which was completed in 1997.
102. A review of the adopted South Derbyshire local plan commenced in January 2002 with the publication of the First Deposit local plan. Although progressing through to public inquiry and Proposed Modifications stage, the Plan was wholly withdrawn in 2005 due to the threat of a legal challenge. In the review of the Plan the general boundaries of the two areas of green belt were proposed to remain unchanged from the adopted Plan except for a minor boundary change in the vicinity of the Derby Southern Spur to take account of the completed section of road. At the local plan inquiry, the inspector also considered objections relating to proposed deletions of a number of other areas of green belt. The only one which he recommended was for an amendment to the green belt boundary to the west of the Alvaston Bypass. He concluded that with the bypass in place, the triangle of land in question had ceased to be significant in checking the urban sprawl of Derby and safeguarding the countryside from encroachment. The bypass was considered to be a clearly defined feature which was capable of providing a long-term boundary between the urban area of Derby and the countryside beyond. This amendment was confirmed in Proposed Modifications to the Plan.



## Summary of existing documents

103. Reviews of green belt boundaries have been carried out in Nottinghamshire in accordance with the structure plan.
104. In Derbyshire, the structure plan has allowed for local plans to make minor alterations to green belt boundaries.
105. The Amber Valley local plan has reached proposed modifications stage. Some deletions from the green belt adjoining towns have been proposed. An area adjoining Derby at Mackworth outside of the green belt was proposed in response to inspector's recommendations against Cinderhill which is in the green belt.
106. A green belt review was carried out for the Ashfield local plan adopted in 2002. Some changes were made but no areas of land have been safeguarded for development beyond 2011.
107. Broxtowe Borough Council initially proposed green belt changes, but eventually made no significant amendments in their adopted 2004 local plan. No areas of land have been safeguarded for development beyond 2011.
108. Derby City has only small areas of green belt, but uses a green wedge technique to identify other areas where land should remain open. Most greenfield land in the City is either in green belt or green wedges. The local plan was adopted in January 2006.
109. The Erewash local plan review proposed changes both deleting and adding to the green belt but in the end no changes were included in the adopted plan of July 2005.
110. The Gedling local plan adopted in July 2005 resulted in changes to the green belt including some villages changing from being 'inset' to 'washed over' and vice versa, and land being taken out of the green belt either for development or as safeguarded land for future development.
111. Newark & Sherwood District Council included some amendments to green belt boundaries around the settlements of Blidworth and Lowdham in their local plan adopted in 1999.
112. Nottingham City's local plan was adopted in November 2005. There are only small areas of green belt and no changes to it were made.
113. Rushcliffe Borough Council has recently received the inspector's report on their local plan review. The plan review initially proposed several green belt sites for development, but only one main area adjoining West Bridgford was proposed at the inquiry. The inspector recommends against that site, and recommends considering other named sites, which include other sites within the green belt.
114. South Derbyshire District Council began a review of their 1998 local plan, but withdrew it in 2005. There is currently a small area of green belt in South Derbyshire.
115. The existing development plan documents were developed in the context of strategic policy guidance at the time. While setting the scene, new analysis is required to set the strategic context up to 2026.

## **Regional Plan Options Document**

### **Introduction**

116. The East Midlands Regional Assembly published the Review of the East Midlands Regional Plan: Options for Change document on 24 October 2005. The consultation period on the Options document ended on 16 January 2006. All of the local authorities within the Nottingham-Derby Green belt area have expressed their views on the document and have indicated their preferred option for housing provision over the period that the new RSS (called the Regional Plan) will plan for up to 2026.
117. Since lodging comments on the Options for Change document, a growth point bid has also been made for the Three Cities sub-area. This bids for government funding on the basis that there will be large scale and sustainable housing and employment growth in the sub-area.
118. The table below provides details of the housing options included in the Options for Change document. The table provides yearly housing figures based on the following:
- 1 = Below trend growth
  - 2 = Trend growth
  - 3 = Above trend growth
  - A = Trend based distribution
  - B = Urban concentration plus regeneration
  - C = Strong urban concentration

<b>Area</b>	<b>1A</b>	<b>1B</b>	<b>1C</b>	<b>2A</b>	<b>2B</b>	<b>2C</b>	<b>3A</b>	<b>3B</b>	<b>3C</b>
<b>Amber Valley</b>	380	340	350	470	420	450	560	510	540
<b>Ashfield</b>	290	270	220	360	330	280	430	400	340
<b>Broxtowe</b>	260	210	220	320	260	270	380	320	330
<b>Derby</b>	570	610	700	710	760	870	860	910	1050
<b>Erewash</b>	310	230	250	390	290	310	470	350	370
<b>Gedling</b>	180	250	260	230	310	330	280	370	400
<b>Newark &amp; Sherwood</b>	360	280	230	450	350	290	540	420	350
<b>Nottingham City</b>	260	930	1070	320	1160	1330	380	1390	1590
<b>Rushcliffe</b>	300	280	290	370	350	370	450	420	440
<b>South Derbyshire</b>	490	470	490	620	590	610	740	700	730

## **Amber Valley**

119. Option 1b (340 dwellings per year) is considered realistic and achievable. Option 2b (420 dwellings per year) is considered challenging but could be delivered subject to sufficient brownfield land in the main towns being available and infrastructure improvements. Development options above these levels would be likely to require greenfield and green belt release.
120. The future strategy for the Borough is likely to focus growth in the four main towns and not the periphery of Derby. A lot of brownfield land has come forward for housing development in recent years particularly in the Belper / Ripley area. The preferred level of growth would be sufficient to sustain the main towns and impact minimally on the green belt.

## **Ashfield**

121. The District has not expressed support for any preferred development option. It considers that provision for a higher level of development should be made to take into account existing commitments and local plan allocations in the urban area and potential urban capacity. Current housing provision in the Sutton/Kirkby area is well in excess of the development options in the Options for Change document.
122. There is a need to ensure adequate housing provision is made in the district to sustain recent growth and regeneration in the district. The District Council considers that housing should be considered as part of an integrated approach to development/regeneration along with issues such as employment, retail and transport.
123. All of the development options in the document could potentially be accommodated wholly within the urban areas of the District with no green belt release required. However, if the RSS identifies the need for higher levels of growth in the Hucknall area compared to areas north of the green belt then some amendment to the green belt might be required.

## **Broxtowe District**

124. Support has been expressed for Option 1b (210 dwellings per year). Option 1b could be accommodated in the existing urban areas and on brownfield sites up to 2021 but green belt release may be required in the longer term period 2021-2026. Option 2b (260 dwellings per year) would be considered as an absolute upper limit and would be likely to require some green belt release.
125. All of the land in the Borough is constrained by green belt and higher growth options have the potential to impact on green belt land.

## **Derby City**

126. Options 1a and 1b (570-610) are identified as being achievable provided identified brownfield land comes forward within the planning period. Other options up to as high as 2b (760 dwellings per year) are possible, but could require greenfield land.

127. Derby currently has significant amounts of brownfield land available and a lot of windfall sites are coming forward for development. However, unless there is significantly increased levels of development on brownfield land, higher rates of development will impinge on land identified as green belt and green wedges.

### **Erewash Borough**

128. Support has been expressed for Option 1b (230 dwellings per year) based on green belt constraints and lack of employment land. This level of growth could be accommodated without significant amounts of green belt release. Higher development levels would be likely to require commensurate levels of green belt release.
129. Urban capacity is a key issue in consideration of any future development debate. The Borough Council is currently reviewing its urban capacity study with a view to looking to capacity up to 2016 and possibly 2021. It is considered likely that a reasonable level of urban capacity still exists in the main towns of Long Eaton and Ilkeston to accommodate some of the new housing required.

### **Gedling Borough**

130. Support has been expressed for Option 2b (310 dwellings per year) as being both realistic and deliverable but dependent on increased urban capacity. This rate of development could be accommodated in the Borough without the need for any amendment to the green belt boundaries.
131. The Borough Council carried out a review of the green belt in its local plan review and considers it has a green belt boundary which is unlikely to require significant change before 2026. The Borough is already over-provided for in housing terms compared to the Joint Structure Plan requirement as it was prepared in respect of the previous structure plan.

### **Newark and Sherwood**

132. Support has been expressed for Option 2a (450 dwellings per year). The District Council considers that it is appropriate to plan for a housing distribution which offers the prospect of selective regeneration led development in the District's western area and which would also safeguard character/qualities of rural areas.
133. The preferred development option could be accommodated largely within the main settlements of Newark, Southwell and Ollerton - and largely on brownfield land. If a higher rate of development was chosen this would require the allocation of some greenfield land. Option 2A is not considered likely to have significant implications for the release of green belt land.

## **Nottingham City**

134. The City Council considers option 1B (930 dwellings per year) to be the most realistic option for Nottingham City alone as it reflects current policy and is considered achievable over the plan period.
135. For the whole of the Nottingham Housing Market Area, Nottingham City considers that option 2B is possible if a growth point bid is successful and enables additional infrastructure.
136. In recent years housing completion levels in the City have been at their highest since the late 1980s. Although there are only small areas of green belt in the city, these may need to be looked at to accommodate additional levels of growth.

## **Rushcliffe Borough**

137. The Borough does not support a specific option although a number of elements of the options are considered to have merit. The Borough considers that Option 1b (280 dwellings per year) may be the most appropriate level of growth to plan for, which is the same as the current structure plan requirement. Any option for development including 1b might be likely to require some green belt release. It is important that account is taken of the ability of existing infrastructure to absorb development especially development on the edge of principal urban areas.
138. The Borough Council could meet most of the requirement in option 1b in the local plan review period to 2021 with a large proportion of the requirement met on brownfield land and windfall sites. Beyond 2021 there may be a need to release more greenfield and green belt land to accommodate development. The strategy for the future is likely to focus development on sites closer to the City which may include land within the green belt rather than on land outside of the green belt.

## **South Derbyshire**

139. Support has been expressed for Option 1b (470 dwellings per year) for the district. Development levels above this would be likely to require significant additional releases of greenfield land.
140. The key issues are about the location of growth whether it be on the periphery of Derby or in Swadlincote or other areas. The issues are not significant in respect of the current green belt as the pressure for development on the periphery of Derby is in the areas that are not constrained by green belt.

## **Summary of Regional Plan Options Responses**

141. The majority of the councils in the Nottingham-Derby green belt area have supported levels of development that are at or below trend. These levels can be accommodated within their administrative areas on brownfield and windfall sites without the need for significant green belt or green wedge release in the RSS period. In some districts / boroughs the preferred option is dependent on increased urban capacity being available and infrastructure improvements over the period of the RSS. Ashfield is the

only council which has indicated it could accommodate development levels above all of the RSS options, and it seeks to do so without green belt release.

142. Nottingham is heavily constrained and most of the development options are likely to require some green belt release in districts around the city. In a number of cases such as Broxtowe and Rushcliffe, the Councils prefer an option which can be accommodated in the short to medium term on brownfield and windfall sites although green belt release is likely to be required towards the end of the RSS period between 2021 and 2026.
143. In most districts / boroughs, such as Amber Valley, Broxtowe, Erewash, Gedling and Rushcliffe, development options above the options they prefer would be likely to require significant amounts of green belt release.

# **Strategic Green Belt Issues**

## **Nottingham and Derby**

### **Introduction**

144. Nottingham and Derby are the principal urban areas in this review. Nottingham contains not only all the land within the City of Nottingham but also extends beyond its boundaries. Derby can be considered almost entirely to be currently within the City of Derby area.
145. The sequential approach set out in Policy 2 RSS8, the sustainability criteria in Policy 3 RSS8, and Policy 5 RSS8 entitled 'concentrating development in urban areas' generally favours development in the principal urban areas, and failing that, on the edge of these areas. This review is concerned with the edge of the urban areas where that is green belt or could in future be green belt.
146. A purpose of including land in green belt as set out in PPG2 is to prevent 'the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas'. While there may be some conflict between green belt policy and the case for expanding urban areas in accordance with the sequential approach, Baker Associates in their 1999 report concluded that a proper interpretation of the reference to 'urban sprawl' is that the concern is as much with achieving a high quality of urban development as with stopping urban expansion. Nevertheless, the existing policy situation is that the green belt boundaries are generally drawn tightly around existing development and any alteration to the boundaries requires detailed justification in terms of PPG2.
147. The history of the Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire green belts has brought about the situation where Nottingham is entirely surrounded by green belt, but Derby has green belt only on its eastern and part of its northern sides. The situation is therefore that any growth of Nottingham faces a green belt issue, whereas in Derby the west and south are not constrained in that manner. Essentially Derbyshire County's concern has been about coalescence with Nottingham and the settlements in between, whereas Nottinghamshire County has also sought to contain the growth of the Nottingham's built up area and the growth of settlements around it. This strategic review should consider whether it remains appropriate for these two different purposes to sit side by side when considering future green belt policy.

### **Nottingham**

148. Nottingham City is surrounded either by urban development or by the green belt. Within the City there are small areas of green belt linking to other areas outside of its boundaries. At the northern edge, the Nottingham City Golf Course is designated as green belt. If it were not green belt, the land would remain as open space providing a green break between the Bulwell area and Hucknall in Ashfield. Green belt around the Nottingham Racecourse and Colwick Country Park reflects the existing open space uses and the fact that much of the land is washland. Green belt to the west and east of Clifton also reflects washland constraints. While there have been minor changes to the green belt boundaries in the past, and there may continue to be so, any changes within the boundaries of Nottingham are unlikely to be strategically significant on their own.

149. Expansion of Clifton (which is within Nottingham City) to the south (into Rushcliffe Borough) is a possibility that has been raised, most recently at the Rushcliffe local plan review. It is called Clifton Pastures or Nottingham Gateway and proposals include a science park. Expansion is in accord with sequential test policies and does not raise issues of coalescence as the nearest settlements are some distance away. Many issues here are design related – for example how best to ensure that growth results in improving the existing Clifton development and that an appropriate edge is created having regard to topography in a manner that does not unreasonably affect the countryside. Any development also needs to be served with appropriate infrastructure. Expansion of NET to the southern edge of Clifton, as is currently proposed and future employment growth associated with Nottingham East Midlands Airport (NEMA), would make this area more attractive to development. However it may be that improving the A453 is key to determining the potential for redrawing the inner green belt boundary in this location.
150. West Bridgford, being a prosperous part of the built up area within close proximity to the centre of Nottingham, and facing considerable development pressure, is a prime candidate for expansion. The development of Compton Acres and Gamston has resulted in the substantial expansion of West Bridgford over the last 30 years. The A52 now forms an obvious defensible boundary for the next stage of development, encompassing Edwalton and surrounds. The inspector's report on the Rushcliffe local plan review recommends against development at Edwalton partly on the grounds that the matter of the need for removing green belt at this location needs to be considered in this strategic review. The inspector also raised concerns about traffic, agricultural quality, landscape, ecology, phasing and delivery. However, the inspector responded more favourably to the possibility of development in the 'Melton Triangle', also within the A52 boundary, indicating that this was an area that could be further considered.
151. Land at Lady Bay, also referred to as the Adbolton site, was also put forward at the Rushcliffe local plan review. This area lies within the 100 year floodplain and the inspector concluded that concerns about flood risk, despite proposals for new flood defences, were so significant that it should not be considered for allocation. In terms of sequential tests, the land is similar to the Edwalton site.
152. The major development site on the eastern edge of Nottingham is at the former Gedling colliery which is allocated in the Gedling Local Plan for housing and employment use with a large area of parkland. Most of the development will be to the west of the park, so the park will generally be seen as providing a firm defensible boundary with green belt to the east. Any further development in this direction would call into question the green belt in the narrow area towards the village of Lambley.
153. Some further growth of the Nottingham built up area to the east is allowed for in the Gedling local plan. For example, at the southern end of the district, land for employment is identified on the edge of Carlton on the road to Stoke Bardolph opposite the sewage treatment plant. Washlands may provide the ultimate extension limits in this direction. The further growth of the Arnold, Redhill and Bestwood areas to the north has been resisted on the grounds that there is a prominent ridgeline.
154. A major extension of Hucknall is provided for in Gedling Borough at Top Wighay Farm. Some of this land is allocated for housing and employment, while the rest is safeguarded for future development requirements. The safeguarded land extends to the Ashfield boundary on the west, north of the current Hucknall limits. Expansion of Top Wighay to the east is limited by a current desire to keep Linby (an historic



village) as a separate area washed over by the green belt. A separate area further east at Papplewick has however been allocated for some growth.

155. Significant provision for growth has already been made for Hucknall in the Ashfield and Gedling local plans based partly on its location with respect to the NET and Robin Hood line. This provision required substantial change to former green belt boundaries. Notwithstanding the potential urban capacity in Hucknall town there continues to be pressure for additional future development to the north of Hucknall and directly to the west of the Top Wighay farm site in Gedling.
156. The narrow green belt gap between Hucknall and Bulwell is generally thought to be important to help reinforce the edges of the urban areas. Part of this gap contains uses such as Nottingham City Golf Course and Bestwood Country Park which provide a degree of protection from development.
157. The area around Junction 26 of the M1 is an area where there has been much pressure for business development. The built up area of Nottingham has already extended into Broxtowe up to the roundabout of the A610 and A6002. As with Hucknall, there is a narrow green belt gap in this location. While the green belt has been an important reason for resisting development, arguments also include traffic congestion. The gap between the edge of Nottingham to the east of the M1 and Nuthall to the west of the M1 is defined by the M1 more potently than the green belt. Nevertheless, the green belt in this location does serve to reinforce the view that Nuthall, Kimberley and Eastwood are quite separate from Nottingham. These areas are considered under the heading of 'settlements' later in this paper.
158. Nottingham extends westwards to Beeston (including Bramcote and Attenborough) and Stapleford. An area of green belt around the A52 separates Beeston and Stapleford and is considered important from a local amenity point of view. To the south of Beeston the area is washland. Growth to the north of Stapleford (perhaps up to the railway line) may be possible but given that this is an area which is particularly sensitive to the threat of merging towns in the Erewash valley, it may be that such growth should not be favoured.
159. Elsewhere in Broxtowe options for extending Nottingham to the west are limited. The A6002 for the most part is a firm defensible boundary. It is a long distance to the next most defensible boundary of the M1 and a large area of land would be involved. Development here would have significant impacts on good quality landscape.

## Derby

160. About half of the perimeter of Derby City is in green belt. While the west and south of Derby do not have a green belt constraint, a firm line for development has been held on the north and east for more than 20 years.
161. Derby City's 13 green wedges are intended to separate suburban areas and link to the countryside outside of Derby City's boundaries. The extent of green wedges has been extensively examined as part of the City's local plan review and the green wedges have been subject to significant development pressure. No significant changes have been proposed by the City Council to the green wedges except for minor amendments to accommodate mixed use developments. To be successful, the City Council is keen to strengthen policy protection for green wedges, possibly through the RSS and for their importance to be recognised by neighbouring

authorities. Green wedges can serve to control the location of development in a manner similar to a green belt although they identify particular areas of constraint rather than covering wide areas of land.

162. The City currently has significant amounts of brownfield land available for development and many windfall sites are coming forward for development. There are few unconstrained greenfield sites in the City which are not allocated for development.
163. To the north-west of Derby, there is green belt within the City boundaries at Allestree Park which extends into Amber Valley and Erewash Borough. The green belt area to the north of the City also has special landscape area and the Derwent Valley Mills world heritage site protection policies. This, together with major roads, floodplain and the existence of defined settlements with historic character nearby, indicates that there is no strategic potential for growing the urban area of Derby in this direction, whether or not it were to remain as green belt.
164. To the north-east of the City proposals for improvements to the A38 at Little Eaton may require minor amendments to the green belt in this location. There is little scope for additional development, however, in this area of Erewash Borough for the same reasons as the north-western area within Amber Valley Borough.
165. The potential for growth along the remainder of the eastern side of the green belt is less clear. To the south-east within South Derbyshire, there are development proposals at Boulton Moor for a large area of new housing development, which adjoins but is outside the green belt area. The green belt boundary here is long established and is likely to need only minor amendments to relate to the already constructed roads and physical features..
166. Other potential extensions of the Derby urban area to the east involving changing the green belt boundaries have been raised by objectors at the last Structure Plan review and the Erewash local plan review but have been resisted. At the moment Erewash does not have any part of the Derby urban area within its boundaries. Any development on this edge would reduce the distance between the urban areas of Derby and Nottingham, and there is potential for coalescence in the area between Spondon and Borrowash / Ockbrook.
167. There is significant demand from developers for extensions to Derby to the west and south of the City. The fact that green belt bounds the City to the east and north has focused developer's attention to the south and west of the City where there are large areas of unconstrained greenfield land. Developers are building up large land banks in these areas. Amber Valley Borough Council has recently allocated land at Radbourne Lane, Mackworth for 600 dwellings in Proposed Modifications to their draft local plan in accordance with the recommendations of the local plan inspector.
168. In South Derbyshire District there are several other proposals for large areas of new housing development on the southern periphery of the City and north of the A50, which have either been submitted as applications or may come forward as applications in the near future. Limited highway capacity on the A38, the need to match housing development with new infrastructure requirements and drainage problems south of Derby towards the A50 are key issues for future development considerations to the south of the City.

## Summary of Issues relating to Nottingham and Derby

169. The green belt encircles Nottingham, but only constrains half of Derby. The pressure for green belt reviews has historically been greater in Nottinghamshire, while policy for the growth of Derby has purposely focused development proposals on the area unconstrained by green belt. Derby partly uses green wedges to control development in addition to the green belt. *Is it appropriate to maintain the different strategies in the two cities?*
170. Extending Clifton to the south in association with the expansion of NET and employment growth at NEMA could contribute to improving Clifton as a place to live and work. Improvements to infrastructure, particularly the A453 are seen as a necessary precursor. *Where should the green belt boundary be?*
171. There is a high demand for development at West Bridgford which is well located to provide for future growth. The inspector on Rushcliffe's local plan review has recently recommended against development at Edwalton partly on the basis that a major green belt release should be considered strategically. Other land, such as that at Lady Bay, was also recommended against. *Should the A52 be regarded as a long term inner boundary of the green belt or would some other feature indicate a more sustainable boundary in the long term?*
172. Areas for the future growth of the Arnold and Carlton areas have been identified in the recent Gedling local plan which includes safeguarded land. *Is it unnecessary to consider further growth in this location?*
173. Hucknall is separated from the Nottingham built up area by a thin wedge of green belt but functions as part of Nottingham. *Is it necessary for the narrow separation all to be defined as green belt? Is there sufficient urban capacity in Hucknall and growth capacity in the Top Wighay farm site (including the safeguarded area) to provide for future development needs in this area?*
174. The limits of Beeston and Stapleford are tightly defined by the green belt. *Should any significant change in green belt boundaries be allowed in this part of the urban area or should it be prevented having regard to the primary purpose of the Nottingham-Derby green belt to prevent any tendency for the two cities to merge towards one another?*
175. A firm green belt line on the boundary of Derby with Erewash and part of Amber Valley and South Derbyshire has been held to date. *Should this line continue to be held, recognising that development pressure may be transferred to that part of the periphery of Derby that is not constrained by green belt?*

## Settlements within the Green Belt

### Introduction

176. There are many settlements within the green belt. The high number of settlements, in close proximity to one another, was one of the reasons for first establishing a green belt. The green belt is still seen as a planning tool to prevent the expansion of settlements in an unsustainable manner.
177. The high number of settlements in this area reflects the mining past. The vast majority of the settlements, especially those in the north, were established as mining communities.
178. This working paper focuses discussion on the settlements within envelopes surrounded by green belt. Where settlements have been washed over by the green belt it is generally assumed that there are good reasons why they are not significant from a strategic perspective.

### Erewash Valley Towns

179. Long Eaton and Ilkeston are market towns situated almost midway between Nottingham and Derby. The green belt separating these with other areas of development is the most important area of green belt as it helps to prevent any tendency for Nottingham and Derby and the intervening settlements to coalesce.
180. Long Eaton, incorporating Sandiacre, is the largest settlement in the green belt and is almost contiguous with Stapleford and Beeston to the east. This means that it has close links with Nottingham. It is considered to be in part of the Nottingham travel to work area. In many ways the town meets sequential tests for further development. However, the boundaries of the town are constrained. The town is entirely to the east of the M1, with the M1 forming a defensible green belt boundary. With washlands to the south, there is little opportunity for Long Eaton to expand. Significantly more brownfield land within the urban area has come forward for redevelopment in the last few years, particularly for housing, which has helped ease pressure for green belt release.
181. Ilkeston including Cotmanhay and Kirk Hallam is more physically separated from other urban areas than Long Eaton. The area, in common with many of the settlements to the north, has suffered from the decline in mining and other industries. Some future development land is provided for in the recently adopted local plan and further minor changes to green belt boundaries are unlikely to be significant strategically. A local issue is whether there should be a green belt gap between Ilkeston and Kirk Hallam. This was considered in the local plan review but not accepted by the inspector. The gap is very narrow and not significant strategically.
182. Stanton Ironworks is separated from the Ilkeston area although there is no green belt gap. The former major ironworks is a large brownfield site little used at present and allocated for employment. Almost all of the Borough's additional employment needs up to 2011 are to be met on the site. A master planning process is underway for this land. The planning brief includes analysing the land's boundaries (which apart from the northern edge are all green belt) and suggesting activities which may be wider than just employment. There are significant issues to address such as the need for

good transport links. Redevelopment has the potential to considerably change the character of the area.

### Amber Valley Towns

183. Amber Valley Borough has four main market towns: Alfreton, Belper, Heanor and Ripley. Alfreton (together with Swanwick and Somercotes) form one continuous urban area which is bounded by the green belt on its southern boundary. Heanor and Ripley are entirely enveloped by the green belt and Belper is almost entirely enveloped by green belt except to the north-west where it is bounded by a special landscape area recognising the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage site.
184. Although the green belt is effectively not a constraint on the Alfreton area (growth can be accommodated in other directions), the green belt is a significant constraint on development in the rest of the district. All the market towns are subject to development pressure and green belt boundaries have been an important local issue. The green belt area to the south-east of Heanor is seen locally as an important area, which helps prevent the coalescence of the settlement with Shipley and Cotmanhay. Proposals to amend the green belt boundary in this area have been strongly resisted.
185. The northern edge of the green belt at Alfreton is about 13km away from both Derby and Nottingham. In effect, the green belt north of Derby encompassing the Amber Valley towns is a lot wider than it is around Nottingham. Potential coalescence of these towns has been an issue which the green belt addresses. There are also issues of ribbon development in between the towns and the impact of new areas of development on the green belt such as at Cinderhill. The Amber Valley towns could have the potential to take more development, but there needs to be a strategic debate about where growth should be focused. Different factors would tend to favour different areas: for example Alfreton is least constrained by green belt but furthest from Nottingham and Derby; Heanor in most need of regeneration; Ripley has the best existing and proposed transport links; Belper is the most constrained by important landscapes.

### Kimberley/Eastwood

186. Kimberley (including Watnall) and Eastwood in Broxtowe Borough tend to be thought of as independent large settlements instead of being part of Nottingham. This may be because they have historically grown independently and also because they are on the western side of the M1. The issue of the gap separating these from Nottingham has been discussed earlier in this paper.
187. The A610 forms a strong defensible green belt boundary to the south of the settlements. The A610, Erewash Canal and River Erewash separates Eastwood from Heanor/Langley Mill in Amber Valley Borough.
188. Between Kimberley and Eastwood is the Ikea Retail Park. Expansion of the retail park is currently the subject of a planning application.
189. The green belt around Kimberley and Eastwood is considered to be important to prevent the coalescence of these settlements. It is also arguably important in protecting the special character of DH Lawrence country at Eastwood and the

surrounding area at Awworth and Cossall. Broxtowe Borough Council was not successful in expanding Watnall to the north at the last review and the inspector was also supportive of maintaining the green belt gap between these settlements and Awworth to the south.

190. Although well located and not fundamentally constrained on the northern sides, it is likely to be difficult to change green belt boundaries in this area with implications for how much development can in future be accommodated.

### Erewash Valley Villages

191. The Erewash valley villages of Breaston, Draycott, Borrowash, Ockbrook, West Hallam and a number of smaller villages are well located in respect of travel distances to Derby, Nottingham and other areas of employment. They are also attractive areas to live and there is considerable pressure for development. House prices are considerably above those in Long Eaton and Ilkeston, impacting on the affordability of the areas.
192. Borrowash and Ockbrook are located within an important area of green belt and any additional growth could result in them merging with Derby, as mentioned earlier in this paper. With the other villages growth is unlikely to raise any strategic urban form issues. However, green belt envelopes around the villages are tight and have been largely unchanged for many years. There were proposals in the Erewash Borough local plan review to amend the green belt at Breaston to allocate a former school site for housing development. However, this faced significant local opposition and was not carried forward in the Plan.
193. This is one of the most important areas of green belt in relation to the principal purpose of the green belt in preventing any tendency for Nottingham and Derby to merge. Any development should be strictly limited to that which would not threaten the identity of individual settlements. Limited expansion of the villages could provide some additional desired and needed housing in the area.

### Northern Area

194. There are numerous small villages within the green belt north of Nottingham and Derby. Most are former mining villages and some are more attractive than others. The villages in Derbyshire generally have tight green belt boundaries which have not changed for many years. There have been some changes to green belt boundaries for the villages in Nottinghamshire as a result of reviews.
195. A notable change is the recent housing allocation by Gedling Borough at Calverton, together with a further area of safeguarded land. This sits together with the intended development of the former colliery at Calverton for employment purposes, although the colliery site remains washed over by green belt. These changes were agreed on the basis that the village has good public transport links to Nottingham and already has a good range of services. New development may also help to regenerate the area.
196. Bestwood Village, a village previously washed over by the green belt, has now been identified for development in the Gedling local plan. This village is also well located, being almost contiguous with Nottingham.

197. The development of the Sherwood Business Park as an Enterprise Zone in Ashfield District for 10 years post 1995 should also be mentioned. The business park was established in the green belt for regeneration purposes following colliery closures. The business park has been highly successful but no proposals for expansion have been made. The business park has only a narrow green belt gap with the settlement of Annesley Woodhouse and is built up to the roads on its eastern edge. Any proposals for expansion would need to be considered strategically in respect of whether this location is preferable for business growth compared to other locations which might better meet policy tests and are not constrained by green belt.

### Burton Joyce and Lowdham

198. These two villages are relatively small but are worthy of separate mention in that they have a rail link with Nottingham. The A612 also provides a direct route to Nottingham.
199. Burton Joyce's green belt boundaries remained the same in the last Gedling local plan. Lowdham had some land removed from the green belt in the last Newark and Sherwood local plan. There are no obvious areas for expansion, parts are in the Trent River flood risk area and any change of boundaries is likely to be controversial. Nevertheless there is considerable pressure for development and further consideration of the strategic suitability of growth in these settlements may be needed.

### Rushcliffe Villages

200. On this southern side of Nottingham there are none of the large settlements within the green belt characterising the area to the west and north. The villages in Rushcliffe are all subject to development pressure. Travel-to-work patterns are all towards Nottingham and in the corridor between Nottingham and NEMA, a large growing employment centre in its own right. There is little demand for development due to employment in the villages. Employment land has recently been established at Ruddington however, and a mixed use development is being promoted on former colliery land currently within the green belt at Cotgrave.
201. The green belt gaps separating Ruddington from Clifton and West Bridgford are locally seen as important. Other settlements are reasonably separated, but nevertheless tightly constrained by green belt envelopes. Whether any of these villages should grow significantly in order to become more sustainable locations in their own right is a strategic matter that could be further considered. The current proposals at Cotgrave, together with the potential for development to help regenerate the village, make Cotgrave a possible candidate.

### Summary of Issues relating to Settlements

202. As the largest towns close to Derby and Nottingham, sequential tests would indicate that the Erewash Valley towns would be suitable locations to accommodate significant levels of growth. *Should Long Eaton and Ilkeston take less growth than*

*trends indicate given the danger of the coalescence of the settlements and other constraints?*

203. Redevelopment of Stanton Ironworks would result in a significantly increased range of traffic movements in the area between Nottingham and Derby, as well as other effects. *Should the proposals and green belt boundary at Stanton Ironworks be further considered at a strategic level?*
204. The Amber Valley towns are settlements with good sustainability credentials given their significant size and range of services, but are all constrained to some extent and there is a danger of coalescence. *What level of growth is appropriate in the Amber Valley towns and where should it be focused?*
205. Should Kimberley and Eastwood be expected to accommodate as much growth as trends would indicate given their position close to Nottingham? *While well located and with a range of services including a major retail park, is there potential to grow Kimberley and Eastwood or is the green belt in this area particularly important?*
206. Minor changes to boundaries in the Erewash Valley villages could provide some locally needed housing. *Should a decision on how much development is needed in the Erewash valley villages be linked to a strategic decision on how much growth Long Eaton and Ilkeston can take?*
207. Calverton and Bestwood Village are examples where a local review of green belt boundaries resulted in agreed changes to boundaries. *Would strategic planning advantages be gained from further changes in village boundaries even though generally the villages are in less sustainable locations than the principal urban areas?*
208. The Sherwood Business Park was established in response to circumstances surrounding mining pit closures. *Should the Sherwood Business Park boundaries be seen as fixed?*
209. Burton Joyce and Lowdham are relatively close to Nottingham with good public transport links. *Should consideration be given to strategic growth of Burton Joyce and Lowdham areas?*
210. The villages south of Nottingham are small. *Should any of the Rushcliffe villages grow to become more sustainable locations, particularly those close to the A453/NEMA corridor?*

## **Outer Boundaries**

### Introduction

211. Outer boundaries have been set in structure plans, and as such have not been able to be changed in local plans in the same way as the boundaries around settlements. The outer boundaries have therefore remained fixed for some 20 years.
212. The outer boundaries should logically be set where green belt is needed on one side of a line, but is not needed on the other side. Purposes set out in PPG2 such as preventing neighbouring towns from merging into one another and assisting in



safeguarding the countryside from encroachment, are important in deciding whether a green belt is needed.

213. The outer boundaries in the case of the Nottingham-Derby green belt must also reflect where issues relating to Nottingham and Derby end, for example a concern about the growth of dormitory settlements. This relates to the purpose set out in PPG2 of encouraging urban regeneration and ties in well with sequential tests which do not favour development in greenfield areas poorly served by public transport. Logically, the outer boundaries should not extend into areas unrelated to Nottingham or Derby. Travel to work data is useful in identifying this.

### South of Derby

214. The issue of the green belt encircling Nottingham, but only affecting half of Derby has been raised earlier. If consideration is given to an inner boundary around Derby, then consideration also needs to be given to the outer boundary.
215. In South Derbyshire District there is a small area of the green belt on the south-eastern side of Derby. Extending this further south would raise questions about how free-standing settlements such as Shardlow, Aston-on-Trent and Weston-on-Trent might be treated. If a green belt was to extend around Derby, key physical features to consider are the A50, the A5132, the River Trent and the change in topography to the south of the River Trent. There are a number of settlements in this area, such as Willington where there is a major proposal for redevelopment of the former power station, as well as the nearby Toyota factory site.

### Leicestershire

216. The current green belt follows the Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire county boundaries south of Long Eaton rather than extending across Leicestershire. This omission has been noted in the past and in the preparation of the Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Joint Structure Plan it was proposed to add a policy to establish a portion of green belt in North West Leicestershire, effectively to make the areas of green belt on either side match up in a logical manner.
217. The Panel's report in 2001 following the Examination in Public concluded that a green belt as proposed would not affect the existing relationship between Nottingham in Derby nor the towns in between them. Given the lack of perceived benefits from the proposal, they questioned whether it was appropriate to make a policy to change the existing Nottingham-Derby green belt. In particular, they questioned the appropriateness of the policy when the need for this strategic review of the green belt was already being proposed in draft regional planning guidance.
218. The proposal continued and the matter became one where the Secretary of State issued a direction in August 2003 to modify the draft structure plan to remove the proposed green belt policy. This was subsequently agreed.
219. This strategic review is an appropriate time to reconsider the idea.
220. A key reason for proposals to add green belt into this area is to meet the advice in PPG2 that green belts should be several miles wide. The green belt south of Long Eaton is not even one mile wide. While to date the suggestion has been to extend the

green belt in something like a line from the Derbyshire to Nottinghamshire ends, the whole issue of what is an appropriate southern boundary of the green belt needs to be considered.

221. It is noted that much of the land in the part of North-West Leicestershire near Long Eaton is in a flood risk area. This flood risk already limits likely future development, however that in itself is no reason not to impose green belt – in fact green belt around other areas of flood risk, for example in Erewash and Broxtowe, reinforces the strategic requirement to limit development.
222. There is major infrastructure in this area in the form of the M1, A453, A50, A42 and railway line. South of the A50 line there is major development such as the village of Castle Donington, industry at Castle Donington, redevelopment of the Castle Donington power station into a major distribution park, as well as the village of Kegworth. To the south of these is the Nottingham East Midlands Airport. If a green belt was to extend in this direction, it is likely that significant areas would need to be excluded from the green belt to have regard to existing development and future strategic policy regarding the Nottingham-NEMA corridor.

#### Rushcliffe boundary

223. The green belt boundary in Rushcliffe Borough extends for some 7-9 kilometres (around 5 miles) from the centre of Nottingham. It deliberately ends on the outskirts of Bingham and East Leake in line with the 1980 structure plan policy establishing the statutory green belt.
224. Whatever the reasons for excluding Bingham and East Leake initially, it is not Rushcliffe Borough Council's policy to prefer these settlements for development compared to the settlements enveloped within the green belt. Nevertheless these two settlements are comparatively large and having them mostly unencumbered by green belt does give the impression that they are to be treated differently. Sites for housing allocations in both have been recommended for further consideration by the Rushcliffe local plan inspector.
225. Consideration needs to be given in this strategic review to both widening and narrowing the green belt. Narrowing the green belt might mean that other settlements would no longer be constrained by the green belt – for example Keyworth or Cotgrave. Widening the green belt would require consideration of the size of an envelope around Bingham and East Leake as well as consideration of whether other settlements should be washed over or inset. It may be difficult to find features to move the boundary out to, other than the Rushcliffe Borough boundary itself.

#### East of Nottingham

226. While the outer boundary in Newark and Sherwood follows some physical features, it does not mark any significant change in the character of the countryside. Instead the line reflects the 1980 structure plan policy establishing the width of the green belt as approximately 9 kilometres in this direction. The green belt is however, popular and supported by local residents.

227. If consideration was given to narrowing the green belt in this location a possibility would be to bring the boundary to the administrative boundary of Gedling Borough. Consideration could also be given to bringing the boundary even further in, if a decision was made not to have a green belt on this side of Nottingham at all to reflect the current green belt policy relating to Derby.
228. Extending the green belt to the east would raise issues relating to a number of settlements and the town of Southwell. A green belt could help protect the setting of Southwell and would limit its growth if that is sought. A detailed consideration would be needed of whether extending the green belt would serve any purpose in relation to Nottingham.

### Boundary up to Northern Towns

229. The northern towns of Mansfield, Kirkby-in-Ashfield, South Normanton and Pinxton, are deliberately outside of the green belt. However in most cases, the green belt extends to the southern boundaries of the towns to prevent coalescence. Arguably the regeneration and development of these towns is its own issue (which will be addressed by the Northern sub-regional strategy) and not directly related to the urban form of Nottingham and Derby.
230. Mansfield is the only town with an area of undeveloped land to the south that is not in the green belt. This land lies within its own district, Ashfield District and Newark and Sherwood District. The green belt boundaries were considered at the inquiry in respect of the Nottinghamshire Green Belt Local Plan and there have been no recent proposals to change them. The Mansfield Ashfield Regeneration Route (MARR) now runs through this area and new development is sought along the route within the area not constrained by green belt.
231. There is also no pressure to narrow the green belt in the vicinity of Mansfield. The northern extent of the green belt follows an area of protected woodland and also serves to maintain a separation distance between the settlements of Rainworth and Blidworth.
232. Similarly, the boundary that constrains the southern edge of Kirkby-in-Ashfield, but not its western and eastern sides is generally supported locally. The boundary follows the River Erewash, A611 and a woodland at Coxmore. Any reduction in the green belt could affect the separation with Annesley.
233. Bolsover District does not have any of the Nottingham-Derby green belt. There is no council policy about this green belt and it has not been mentioned as an issue in local development framework consultations. However, consideration could be given to extending the green belt around Pinxton, both to the east and west, up to the A38. Green belt in this area was previously in the South East Derbyshire Green Belts local plan and could help protect the setting of Pinxton and separate it from other developed areas. If consideration is given to a green belt in this area, the consideration would need to cross the boundaries into Ashfield District and Amber Valley District.
234. The green belt constrains the southern edge of Alfreton/ Somercotes/ Swanwick in Amber Valley District. Reducing the green belt in this area could have the effect of increasing development pressure along the southern edge of these settlements. Increasing the green belt could help to protect areas of open land and direct development in other directions. Consideration of the extent of green belt in this area

needs to tie in with issues relating to the hierarchy of the Amber Valley towns mentioned around paragraph 183.

### Western Boundary

235. The western boundary of the green belt currently ends where there is no further danger of settlement coalescence. If the green belt was to extend further west within Amber Valley District, it would encounter only small settlements. Many areas to the west already have various protection policies such as the World Heritage area along the Derwent River and Kedleston Hall. There may, in general, be no purpose in extending the green belt.
236. The western boundary only becomes an issue where it gets close to Derby. As highlighted earlier, a broad choice needs to be made on whether to extend a green belt around all or part of Derby. If there is a need for a green belt around Derby, then consideration will need to be given to its outer extent.

### Summary of Issues affecting the outer boundaries

237. The green belt encircles Nottingham, but only constrains half of Derby. *Should these different strategies be maintained or should one match the other?*
238. The southern edge of the green belt is effectively a line from the southern edge of Derby to Long Eaton, then considerably wider in Nottinghamshire. *What is the appropriate width in South Derbyshire and Rushcliffe and should green belt be considered in North West Leicestershire in the context of considering the strategic future of the Nottingham-NEMA corridor?*
239. The eastern boundary follows some definable features but mainly reflects the decision on how wide the green belt should be around Nottingham. *How wide should the green belt be to the east? Should there only be green belt where there is danger of settlement coalescence?*
240. In the north, the boundary reaches regenerating towns. Extending the green belt further would raise questions about need in relation to Nottingham and Derby, and could unnecessarily constrain the towns. Reducing the green belt might give a signal about development that could lead to settlements coalescing. *Is the current northern boundary appropriately identified?*
241. The current western boundary is generally not subject to development pressure. *Should the green belt be extended around Derby?*

## Conclusion

242. The purpose of this working paper has been to provide a background context to consider the strategic issues relating to the review of the Nottingham-Derby green belt. It has provided a historical context to the definition of the green belt and outlined key issues affecting the green belt in emerging structure and local plans.
243. The overall extent of the Nottingham-Derby green belt has not changed radically since the 1960s. Since that time the green belt has performed its main function and purpose well in preventing the coalescence of the principal urban areas of

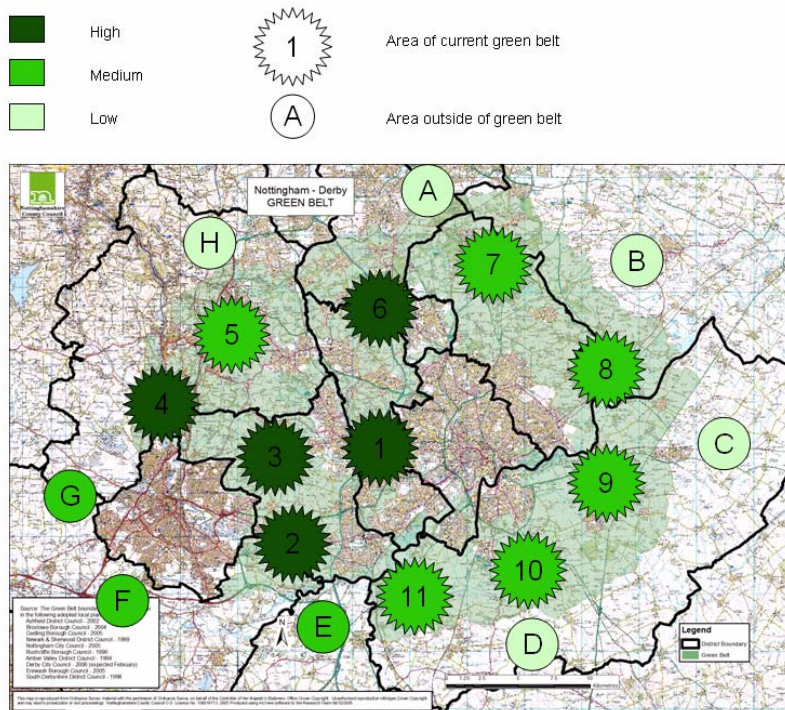
Nottingham and Derby. It has also helped to maintain separations between other settlements. It has probably helped in directing development to town centres in preference to areas within the green belt, thereby aiding regeneration. Structure and local plan reviews since then have resulted in relatively minor amendments in green belt boundaries to accommodate new development.

244. The current review of the East Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy and production of the Three Cities Sub-Regional Strategy provides the opportunity to incorporate a full and comprehensive review of the Nottingham-Derby green belt, particularly the extent of the green belt both in terms of its inner boundaries and outer boundaries and in the context of the need to provide land for future development needs to 2026. It also provides the opportunity to address the potentially competing aims of the sequential approach to the provision of land for development and the purpose of the green belt.
245. Consultation on development options for the future has recently been undertaken in the first stage of the RSS review. The majority of councils in the Nottingham-Derby green belt area have indicated a preference for levels of development at or below trend, which can be accommodated within their administrative areas on brownfield and windfall sites without the need for green belt release. In other cases the preferred development level is likely to require some green belt release towards the end of the RSS period in 2021-2026. If a strategy is adopted which requires levels of development well above those sought by the councils, then more green belt land is likely to need to be released. It is important to be clear as to where any such releases should be made and why.
246. The green belt encircles Nottingham but only constrains half of Derby. Existing green belt policy has resulted in considerable development pressure to the south and west of Derby on areas of unconstrained greenfield land. Re-consideration is needed of whether this pattern of development is appropriate. Other issues relate to the ability of the two cities to accommodate future development needs and their impact on the green belt. Future green belt releases may be needed to the south and north of Nottingham (e.g. at Clifton, West Bridgford and Hucknall). Areas for future growth to the east of Nottingham are more difficult to identify given that there are already areas of safeguarded land. The area between Nottingham and Derby may be so important to the green belt that little development should be directed there.
247. With regard to main settlements within the green belt, key issues relate to which settlements should be the focus for growth given green belt constraints. While it is suggested that there is little scope for growth in Long Eaton and Ilkeston generally, the redevelopment of Stanton Ironworks may provide opportunities for redevelopment without the need to release green belt land. The Amber Valley towns, Kimberley and Eastwood might be suitable locations for growth but are all constrained by the need to retain their separate identities and avoid coalescence. Villages such as those in the Erewash valley, Burton Joyce, Lowdham and villages in Rushcliffe might also be considered, but the strategic significance of these is limited given their small size.
248. The outer boundary of the green belt has remained unchanged for over 20 years. Issues include whether to widen or narrow the green belt within Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire and whether to extend it into Leicestershire. It appears that there is little scope for any reductions or extensions on the northern edge as the boundary with towns to the north is quite firm. The points where the purposes of the green belt are met on one side of a line, but not on the other, should be used to define the general extent.

## **Glossary**

Brownfield	Used to describe developed or previously developed land.
Envelope	Used to describe the boundaries of a settlement inset from the green belt.
Greenfield	Used to describe land that has not been previously developed or has regenerated – for example it may be agricultural land or land where the remains of any structure or activity have blended into the landscape and are considered as part of the natural surroundings.
Inset	Used to describe a settlement which is not in the green belt but is surrounded by it.
Safeguarded	Used to describe land that has been in the green belt but is identified as possibly available for development outside of the current planning period. Policies often refer to safeguarded land being returned to the green belt if not needed for development.
Washed over	Used to describe any land in the green belt. Often used particularly to refer to settlements which are not inset.

# Nottingham-Derby Green Belt Review



## Assessment of Purposes and Role of the Green Belt

Lynette Hughes  
Nottinghamshire County Council  
and  
Steve Buffery  
Derbyshire County Council  
17 August 2006

This is an information and discussion paper. It is the work of officers and has not been formally considered by any authority. It therefore does not represent the views of any authority or other body. Comments on the paper are welcome and can be forwarded to [lynette.hughes@nottsc.gov.uk](mailto:lynette.hughes@nottsc.gov.uk) or [steve.buffery@derbyshire.co.uk](mailto:steve.buffery@derbyshire.co.uk).

# ASSESSMENT PAPER

## Introduction

- 1 This paper meets one of the requirements set out in the project plan for completion of the Nottingham-Derby green belt review as follows: *Assessment of how the land within the green belt fulfils, and how areas suggested for additions to the green belt might fulfil, the five purposes of the green belt set out in paragraph 1.5 of PPG2 and what role areas of open green belt land might play as part of the green infrastructure in the sub-area.*
- 2 PPG2 is the government's policy advice on green belts dated 1995. PPG2 sets out five main purposes of including land in green belts:
  - To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas;
  - To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another;
  - To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
  - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
  - To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.
- 3 PPG2 also indicates that land protected by green belt has a positive role to play in delivering other objectives such as providing opportunities for access to the countryside for the urban population; providing opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation near urban areas; retaining and enhancing landscapes; improving damaged and derelict land around towns; securing nature conservation interests; and retaining land in agricultural, forestry and related uses. Collectively these objectives relate to the contribution that green belts make to the 'green infrastructure' of a region.
- 4 The first part of this paper selects broad areas of existing green belt, and the second part analyses all possible extensions to the green belt around its current periphery. The approach is based on extensive areas rather than specific segments. It is recognised that segments within the areas may have different qualities but broadly the areas share common characteristics.
- 5 The areas are rated for their importance in a table. The rating uses the five purposes set out in PPG2, followed by a rating for its value or potential value for recreational uses and nature conservation as part of the green infrastructure in this part of the region. All of these purposes and roles are given equal weight. A rating of X is given to each purpose for low (or no) importance through to XXXXX for very high importance. The number of X is added together. A subtotal of PPG2 purposes is noted then an overall assessment rating is provided. Where the score is 1-10 the importance is considered to be low; 11-20 medium; and 21-30 high.
- 6 The areas are illustrated on the accompanying map above.
- 7 It is recognised that the first green belt purpose of 'checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas' is less of an issue now under the plan-led system than it was when green belts were first designated. However, some urban areas are subject to considerable pressure for new housing development on sites which are not planned or allocated in local plans.



- 8 Due to the time constraints in carrying out this review, the assessment of green infrastructure mainly considers features of national and regional importance although it is recognised that there may be other more locally important features in each area of green belt which are not referred to.
- 9 The ratings and map are intended to identify the strategic pattern of the relative importance of different areas of green belt. It is recognised that the reality of the green belt is complex and any of a number of different ways of rating the relative importance of areas could be valid. This rating method is simple and it is considered to produce valid results.
- 10 This paper builds on previous green belt review work. A green belt review working paper produced in April 2006 explains the basis for the strategic review of the green belt which was established in policy 14 of RSS8, discusses existing policies and documents, and identifies spatial issues. The working paper is available on the internet at: <http://www.emra.gov.uk/regionalplan/>.
- 11 Key points from the working paper include:
  - Land in sustainable locations such as that on the edge of urban areas and settlements may be required for new development over the next 20 years. This may impact on land which is currently designated as green belt.
  - The Nottingham-Derby green belt is made up of two separate green belts established with different purposes. There is a need to reconcile this given that the policy basis will be in the Regional Plan rather than individual structure plans. The Nottinghamshire green belt sought to contain the growth of Nottingham and prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another. The South East Derbyshire green belt sought to prevent urban expansion in the Derby-Nottingham area and maintain the separate identity of smaller settlements.
  - Responses on the Regional Plan Options Document in January 2006 indicate a cautious approach to growth from districts with green belt: most seeking a scale of development which can be accommodated on non-green belt land at least in the short to medium term.
- 12 Since the above paper was prepared, a growth point bid has been submitted to the Government on behalf of the three City Councils and three County Councils for the 3 Cities sub-area. This bid seeks government funding on the basis of the high amount of growth anticipated in the 3 Cities. Amongst the proposals, it is recognised that an urban extension to the Nottingham principal urban area will be required to accommodate future development requirements which is likely to require green belt release. Another growth point bid has been made for the Mansfield-Ashfield area in the Northern sub-area, which in part extends to the green belt around Annesley Woodhouse, but growth in this area is not expected to impact on the green belt.
- 13 This paper is one of the elements of work which feeds into strategic choices on where to direct development in the 3 Cities and Northern sub-regional strategies of the Regional Plan which may result in proposals to delete areas of green belt in local development frameworks. It also feeds into whether the sub-regional strategies in the Regional Plan will identify that the green belt should be extended in certain areas which will need to be reflected in future local development frameworks. This paper should not be interpreted as providing definitive recommendations on where to direct development or where to extend

the green belt – it is simply one piece of work which will be considered along with others in making professional and political decisions.

- 14 The remaining area of work set out in the green belt review project plan is to provide comment on suggested areas for growth where these involve the release of green belt land. This is only relevant to the 3 Cities SRS. The Three Cities Officer Group has now prepared a draft SRS which includes housing strategies for the Derby, Leicester and Nottingham Core Housing Market Areas (HMAs) based on an assessment of a number of development ‘choices’. The SRS provides the district level apportionments of housing development within each HMA and identifies broad locations where development should be focussed. This remaining area of work although starting later than this assessment will also be completed in August 2006 and discuss the implications of the HMA strategies on the existing extent of the Nottingham-Derby green belt and the case for designating new areas of green belt.

## Existing Green Belt

### 1. Nottingham to Ilkeston and Long Eaton

- 15 This is the area between Nottingham and Ilkeston and Long Eaton south of the A610. The southern edge is the River Trent. The areas of green belt around Beeston and Stapleford are included. The M1 and the A52 are key transport routes going through areas of green belt. Most of this area is in Broxtowe.
- 16 The green belt serves to prevent the spread of Nottingham, which is largely contained within the City boundaries and A6002 but under pressure to expand westwards. The A610 forms a barrier to the expansion of Eastwood and Kimberley into this area, and the Erewash River and Canal forms a barrier to Ilkeston and Long Eaton expanding eastwards. The green belt reinforces the separation of Ilkeston, Long Eaton, Stapleford and Beeston, and prevents the expansion of the smaller settlements of Awsworth and Trowell which are within the area.
- 17 The green belt coincides with other constraints to development south of Beeston, Chilwell and Long Eaton most notably the floodplain around the River Trent. Recreational facilities are important elements of green infrastructure in this area. In the wider green belt area, other green infrastructure features include areas of Ancient Woodland, the southern part of the Charnwood Community Forest area and a sizeable number of Local Nature Reserves and Sites of Special Scientific Interest.
- 18 There are historic setting issues around Awsworth, Strelley and Cossall which is part of DH Lawrence country.

To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	XXXXX
To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another	XXXX
To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	XXXX
To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	XX
To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land	XXXX
Assessment of PPG2 purposes (19)	

Importance as part of green infrastructure	XXXX
Overall assessment (23)	HIGH

## 2. Derby to Long Eaton

- 19 This area consists of the green belt in South Derbyshire District and part of that in Erewash Borough. The area encompasses the green belt around the villages of Borrowash, Ockbrook, Draycott and Breaston. Small areas of green belt south of Long Eaton and north of Sandiacre are also in this area. The M1 and the A52 are key transport routes.
- 20 The green belt is important in maintaining a wide area of countryside between Derby and Long Eaton (albeit interspersed by a number of villages). The green belt prevents the spread of Derby to the east, particularly Spondon towards the settlements of Borrowash and Ockbrook. Additionally, the green belt helps protect the separate identities of settlements and protect the open character of the countryside. Tight green belt boundaries ensure that there is no chance of villages growing to the extent that Derby and Long Eaton might be seen to be merging.
- 21 To the south–east of Derby within South Derbyshire District the green belt area is less important, preventing coalescence of the urban area of Derby with villages in the Trent Valley such as Shardlow and Aston-on-Trent. Historically the green belt boundary to the east of Boulton Moor was defined to allow for major new housing development in the area required in the Structure Plan.
- 22 In Long Eaton/Sandiacre the open gaps between the town and Breaston to the west and Stanton to the north are very narrow. The key features of the M1 and the River Erewash and canal identify the limits of Long Eaton but the green belt also plays a key role in helping prevent the coalescence of these settlements. To the south of Long Eaton the green belt coincides with the River Trent floodplain.
- 23 The green belt area contains a number of important recreational facilities such as those around the River Trent, Elvaston Castle Grade 2\* Listed Building and Country Park, and a golf driving range. There are also Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation at Elvaston Castle and near Shardlow.

To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	XXXXX
To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another	XXXX
To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	XXXXX
To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	X
To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land	XXXX
Assessment of PPG2 purposes (19)	
Importance as part of green infrastructure	XXXX
Overall assessment (23)	HIGH

### 3. Derby to Ilkeston

- 24 The area between Derby and Ilkeston contains the village of West Hallam and a number of smaller settlements. There is no green belt separating Ilkeston from Kirk Hallam and from Stanton Ironworks, although there are recreational routes separating these.
- 25 The green belt in this area performs an important role in preventing the coalescence of Ilkeston with other nearby settlements such as Shipley and Heanor to the north-east, Eastwood to the north, Awsworth to the north-east, Trowell to the east and Sandiacre to the south. To the north-east, west, south-west and east of Ilkeston and West Hallam there are areas of open countryside and therefore the green belt performs another important role in helping to prevent encroachment of the urban area into the countryside.
- 26 The tight boundaries of the green belt encourage the redevelopment of derelict and brownfield land within Ilkeston town centre and should help to encourage redevelopment on other large sites such as at Stanton Ironworks. A Stanton Regeneration Area Action Plan is currently being developed.
- 27 The green belt area contains a number of recreation facilities such as the Nutbrook Trail and other recreational trails as well as golf courses. There are also important areas of conservation such as the Locko Park Estate, a number of areas of Ancient Woodland and several SSSIs.

To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	XXXXX
To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another	XXXX
To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	XXXX
To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	X
To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land	XXXX
Assessment of PPG2 purposes (18)	
Importance as part of green infrastructure	XXXX
Overall assessment (22)	HIGH

### 4. Immediate north of Derby

- 28 This is the green belt area immediately north of Derby in Amber Valley Borough and Erewash Borough in addition to a small area within Derby City's boundary. The A38 is a key transport route in this area.
- 29 The main purpose of the green belt is to prevent the unrestricted spread of the urban area to the north of the City, particularly around Allestree and Oakwood and their coalescence with the villages of Breadsall, Little Eaton, Quarndon, Duffield and Milford and the larger settlement of Belper beyond. The open gap between Allestree, Little Eaton and Duffield is fairly narrow. Separation is considered important due to the high quality of the landscape and the character of the individual villages. A Special Landscape Area is defined to the north of Duffield and west of Belper. The Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site and Heritage Site Buffer zone lie directly to the north of Allestree. North of the City the green belt therefore helps to protect the landscape and countryside from

encroachment and also helps to reinforce conservation and enhancement policies. The attractive landscape also performs as a recreational area and other green infrastructure features include areas of Ancient Woodland, two Local Nature Reserves and several SSSIs.

To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	XXXX
To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another	XXXX
To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	XXXX
To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	XXXX
To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land	XXX
Assessment of PPG2 purposes (17)	
Importance as part of green infrastructure	XXX
Overall assessment (22)	HIGH

### 5. Amber Valley Towns

- 30 Belper, Ripley and Heanor are the main Amber Valley towns in the green belt. In addition this area encompasses a number of other settlements and ribbon development inset from the green belt. The area is within Amber Valley Borough. The A38 and A610 are key transport routes.
- 31 There is no issue of the unrestricted sprawl of the large built up areas of Nottingham and Derby into this area, but the green belt is very important in preventing the neighbouring towns from a tendency to merge. The open gaps, where they exist, are protected by the green belt and the extension of ribbon development is halted, such as in the area south of Heanor which includes Shipley Country Park.
- 32 Much of Belper is within the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site and Heritage Site Buffer Zone. The green belt performs an important function in preventing the encroachment of the town into the surrounding countryside and important landscape, and protecting the historic character and rural setting of the town.
- 33 In recent years the green belt has also played a major part in encouraging the regeneration and redevelopment of areas of derelict land in the area, particularly some of the former large mill sites in the Derwent Valley, which have been subject to proposals for mixed-use developments.
- 34 The area has a limited number of green infrastructure features although there is Shipley Country Park, areas of Ancient Woodland and a number of Local Nature Reserves.

To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	X
To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another	XXXXX
To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	XXXX
To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	XXX
To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land	XXXX
Assessment of PPG2 purposes (17)	

Importance as part of green infrastructure	XX
Overall assessment (19)	MEDIUM

#### 6. North of Eastwood, Kimberley and Hucknall

- 35 The green belt north of Eastwood, Kimberley and Hucknall includes a number of inset villages such as Selston and Annesley. This area encompasses part of Broxtowe Borough, Ashfield District and part of Gedling Borough. The M1 bisects the area and Junction 26 exists is a key transport interchange. The northern extent of the green belt is the southern edge of Kirkby-in-Ashfield and Pinxton.
- 36 There are narrow green belt gaps between the edge of the contiguous Nottingham urban area and Kimberley and Hucknall. These gaps are continually under pressure and the green belt helps reinforce a separation and prevents settlements merging.
- 37 There have been a lot of regeneration activities in this area within the town centres and the former colliery sites at Hucknall, Annesley, Bentinck, Newstead and Moorgreen.
- 38 There is pressure to expand the various settlements in the area and the green belt helps safeguard the countryside from encroachment. The green belt helps to protect the character of settlements such as Annesley, and reinforces the separation of Eastwood and Kimberley.
- 39 There are some green infrastructure resources which include areas of Ancient Woodland, a number of SSSIs and areas of mature landscape which are visually prominent. There is also some historic character to the area as part of DH Lawrence country and the green belt helps preserve the setting.

To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	XXXXX
To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another	XXXX
To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	XXXX
To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	XX
To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land	XXXX
Assessment of PPG2 purposes (19)	
Importance as part of green infrastructure	XXX
Overall assessment (22)	HIGH

#### 7. Ravenshead to Calverton and surrounds

- 40 This block of green belt extending east from Hucknall and north from Redhill involves the inset villages of Bestwood, Ravenshead, Blidworth and Calverton. The Bestwood Country Park marks the northern edge of Nottingham and the green belt covers this land and land to the north. The green belt extends beyond Gedling Borough into Newark & Sherwood District.
- 41 The green belt assists in safeguarding the countryside in this area and encourages urban regeneration by limiting the extent of the principal urban

area although this is already largely limited by the Bestwood Country Park. The green belt also encompasses the primary ridgeline which extends from the Bestwood Country Park eastwards. Further east the land is more remote from the threat of sprawl and settlements are well spaced. In this area the green belt does serve to reinforce firm village boundaries and reflects mature landscape areas.

- 42 Newstead Abbey, a number of wooded areas some of which are Ancient Woodland, several SSSIs and a Local Nature Reserve exist in this area of green belt, which is included within the area covered by the Greenwood Community Forest making it quite important as part of the green infrastructure of the sub-area.

To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	XXXX
To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another	X
To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	XXX
To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	X
To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land	XXXX
Assessment of PPG2 purposes (13)	
Importance as part of green infrastructure	XXX
Overall assessment (16)	MEDIUM

#### 8. East of Arnold and Carlton

- 43 East of Arnold and Carlton the green belt extends over Gedling Borough into Newark & Sherwood District. The villages of Burton Joyce and Lowdham are inset together with a few other villages, although some such as Lambley and Woodborough are washed-over by the green belt.
- 44 The primary ridgeline is in the green belt close to the principal urban area in this area. The green belt helps prevent the expansion of the principal urban area and prevent settlements merging. A particular threat is of further ribbon development between Nottingham and Burton Joyce, and the green belt helps to avoid this. Beyond Burton Joyce the green belt helps prevent the threat of coalescence between Burton Joyce and Bulcote, Bulcote and Lowdham, and between Gunthorpe, Lowdham and Caythorpe.
- 45 The green belt contains the areas of attractive undulating countryside in the Greenwood Community Forest as well as the River Trent and its floodplain. Other green infrastructure features include a Local Nature Reserve.

To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	XXX
To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another	XXX
To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	XXX
To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	X
To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land	XXX
Assessment of PPG2 purposes (13)	
Importance as part of green infrastructure	XXX
Overall assessment (16)	MEDIUM

9. East of West Bridgford to Bingham

- 46 This green belt area which encompasses that part of Rushcliffe District east of West Bridgford includes Radcliffe, Cotgrave, Cropwell Bishop and East Bridgford. It extends to the western edge of Bingham. The A52 is the main transport route.
- 47 North-east of West Bridgford the green belt coincides with the floodplain around the River Trent, and land held for recreational uses such as the National Water Sports Centre. Development in this area, such as an extension of Lady Bay, faces issues relating to flooding.
- 48 Extension of the Gamston area east would result in development on the eastern side of the A52 which currently forms a clear inner boundary for the green belt in this area. Development here would also affect the existing site of Nottingham Airport.
- 49 The villages within the area are under pressure to expand. While there is no real threat of settlements merging, there is the threat of encroachment into the countryside and concern about the open character of the green belt generally.

To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	XXXX
To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another	X
To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	XXX
To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	X
To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land	XXX
Assessment of PPG2 purposes (12)	
Importance as part of green infrastructure	XXX
Overall assessment (15)	MEDIUM

10. South of West Bridgford to East Leake

- 50 South of West Bridgford are the settlements of Ruddington, Tollerton and Keyworth and a number of washed over villages. The green belt extends to a line at the northern edge of East Leake.
- 51 The A52 forms a semi-circle around West Bridgford. While development extends to the A52 in parts, there is some green belt covering land south of Edwalton including Sharphill Wood. The A52 could be considered as the ultimate defensible inner boundary to the future green belt south of West Bridgford.
- 52 The green belt serves to prevent the expansion of West Bridgford, which is part of the Nottingham principal urban area, and helps avoid any coalescence between Ruddington, West Bridgford and Clifton, as well as limiting the development of smaller villages.
- 53 The area includes a number of green infrastructure features such as a Local Nature Reserve, two SSSIs, various Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation and a Wildlife Trust Reserve.



To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	XXXX
To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another	XXX
To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	XXX
To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	X
To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land	XXX
Assessment of PPG2 purposes (14)	
Importance as part of green infrastructure	XXX
Overall assessment (17)	MEDIUM

### 11. Clifton and South

- 54 The area south of Clifton contains the washed-over villages of Gotham and Barton-in-Fabis, as well as the Ratcliffe-on-Soar power station. The area is mainly within Ruscliffe Borough extending to the boundary to North West Leicestershire. The A453 is the key transport route and there are proposals for improvements to allow for better traffic movement along this road leading to the M1, NEMA and the proposed Parkway Station.
- 55 There are wide vistas across much of the area, with a hill near Clifton preventing views in and out of the city. There are also small areas of green belt within Nottingham City around Clifton, mainly coinciding with the floodplain of the River Trent.
- 56 The green belt serves to prevent the expansion of Clifton which is currently limited within Nottingham City boundaries. It also serves to limit any growth in the villages.
- 57 The area has a limited number of green infrastructure features which includes an area of Ancient Woodland and several SSSIs.

To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	XXXX
To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another	X
To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	XXX
To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	X
To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land	XXX
Assessment of PPG2 purposes (12)	
Importance as part of green infrastructure	XX
Overall assessment (14)	MEDIUM

## Potential Extensions to Green Belt

### A. North around Mansfield

- 58 There are some areas of undeveloped land to the north of the existing green belt on either side of Kirkby-in-Ashfield and just south of Mansfield. This area

would contain those areas within Ashfield District, Mansfield District and Newark & Sherwood District east to Rainworth.

- 59 The green belt is currently intended to focus on large built up areas around Nottingham and Derby, rather than separating Nottingham from the Mansfield area in the north. If it was extended to here it would serve to check the spread of the large built-up areas of Mansfield and Kirkby-in-Ashfield and perhaps change the purposes of the green belt.
- 60 While a green belt could serve to help prevent further merging of Kirkby, Sutton, Mansfield and Rainworth, local designations identifying open breaks between settlements could also serve this purpose if it is needed.
- 61 To the west of Kirkby-in-Ashfield, the current boundary runs along the River Erewash which forms a defensible boundary along the same line as the boundary of Bolsover District.
- 62 The current boundary on the southern side of Rainworth also seems to be a clear and defensible boundary.
- 63 The Mansfield-Ashfield Regeneration Route (MARR) runs through part of this area. Current intentions are for development on the northern side of MARR, but in the longer term sites on the southern side will also be considered. It is therefore considered inappropriate to change the green belt boundary to include this land given its future development potential.
- 64 The area is of limited importance for green infrastructure but is included within the area covered by the Greenwood Community Forest.

To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	X
To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another	XX
To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	XX
To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	X
To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land	XXX
Assessment of PPG2 purposes (9)	
Importance as part of green infrastructure	X
Overall assessment (10)	LOW

B. East around Southwell

- 65 This area would involve extending the green belt in Newark & Sherwood District east of its current line.
- 66 Remote from Nottingham, there appears to be little need for an extension to the green belt eastwards. A green belt could serve a purpose however, in preserving the setting and special character of Southwell. It might also serve to reinforce the notion that the size of Southwell needs to be limited to prevent it growing as a commuter town for Nottingham. Other settlements such as Farnsfield could also be encircled by green belt and any pressure for new development in the countryside would gain additional green belt protection. A

possible defensible boundary for the green belt would be the A617 to the north and a line with the Rushcliffe boundary.

To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	X
To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another	X
To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	XXX
To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	XXX
To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land	X
Assessment of PPG2 purposes (9)	
Importance as part of green infrastructure	X
Overall assessment (10)	LOW

### C. East around Bingham

- 67 This area would involve extending the green belt east in Rushcliffe Borough and would involve inseting Bingham and other settlements.
- 68 The western edge of Bingham along the A46 is the edge of the green belt and the A52 to the south of it also marks a boundary of the green belt. Much of Bingham is however unconstrained by green belt. Bingham is not a 'large built-up area', and there is no real potential for towns merging, although there are a number of settlements in reasonably close proximity. An extension of the green belt around Bingham could serve to contain the growth of Bingham to prevent it growing as a commuter settlement for Nottingham. The appropriate boundaries of Bingham would need to be decided on. Consideration of whether to inset other villages or wash-over them would also be needed. A possible defensible boundary would be the Rushcliffe borough boundary. The area is of limited green infrastructure importance but includes a Local Nature Reserve and several SSSIs.

To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	X
To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another	XX
To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	XXX
To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	X
To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land	X
Assessment of PPG2 purposes (8)	
Importance as part of green infrastructure	X
Overall assessment (9)	LOW

### D. South around East Leake

- 69 The southern edge of the green belt is at East Leake and a number of smaller villages: Sutton Bonington, Widmerpool, Kinoulton, Colston Bassett. The area would involve extending the green belt south of these within Rushcliffe Borough.

- 70 Of the villages south of the current green belt, perhaps only East Leake may be considered appropriate for growth. An extension of the green belt in this area could serve to contain growth to prevent East Leake growing as a commuter settlement for Nottingham and elsewhere. Appropriate boundaries for East Leake would need to be decided on. A possible defensible boundary for the green belt would be the Rushcliffe borough boundary. The area has few features of green infrastructure importance.

To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	X
To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another	X
To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	XXX
To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	X
To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land	X
Assessment of PPG2 purposes (7)	
Importance as part of green infrastructure	X
Overall assessment (8)	LOW

#### E. South of Long Eaton

- 71 This area would involve extending the green belt south of Long Eaton into North West Leicestershire District.
- 72 The case for designating green belt in North-West Leicestershire was considered in the recent Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Structure Plan Review. The Secretary of State directed that the proposed area of green belt should not be included in the Plan. The direction was largely due to there having been no strategic review of the Nottingham-Derby green belt at the time. This is therefore the appropriate opportunity to consider this issue.
- 73 Currently the lack of a green belt in this vicinity appears as an anomaly largely based on county boundaries and the history that only Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire had green belt land, not Leicestershire.
- 74 The area immediately south of Long Eaton into North-West Leicestershire is floodplain. There is no threat of the spread of Long Eaton into this area. However, there has been recent development pressure around Castle Donington, the former Castle Donington Power Station and Kegworth Village. To the south NEMA is a major area of growth. The area is also important for the strategic highway network being crossed by the M1, A50 and A453. The area also includes the proposed Parkway Station.
- 75 The area is of limited importance for green infrastructure but includes number of areas of Ancient Woodland and several SSSIs.
- 76 The main purpose of the designation of new green belt in this area would be to safeguard the countryside from encroachment. If green belt was designated in this area a key issue is how wide any new area of green belt should be, particularly given the importance of NEMA and the A453 corridor for growth in the area. In the Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Deposit Draft Structure Plan a small area of green belt was proposed which followed the line of the A50 and floodplain of the Rivers Trent and Soar. However, a line further south

of this might marry better with the existing green belt to the east within Rushcliffe (or a future line if it was extended). If Castle Donington and Kegworth were to be surrounded by green belt, consideration would need to be given to the appropriate boundaries for these settlements.

To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	X
To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another	XX
To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	XXX
To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	X
To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land	XX
Assessment of PPG2 purposes (9)	
Importance as part of green infrastructure	XX
Overall assessment (11)	MEDIUM

#### F. South of Derby

- 77 This area would involve extending the green belt to the south of Derby within South Derbyshire District.
- 78 Historically, there has been no green belt to the south of Derby as the need for a green belt was perceived only in the area north and the area east between Derby and Nottingham. This has meant that development has been deliberately focused to the south of the city in principal transport corridors. Large new areas of housing have been planned and allocated at Heatherton, Rykneld Road and West Chellaston in the Derby City Local Plan and Boulton Moor in the South Derbyshire Local Plan.
- 79 In recent years, particularly since the completion of the A50 in the late 1990s, there has been significant development pressure for new housing in the area to the south of the City and north of the A50. Within the City boundaries there has been development pressure on the southern edge of the urban area, although some of these areas are protected by local green wedge policies. In South Derbyshire there are currently a number of major development proposals for housing on the southern periphery of Derby and further south for example on the site of the former Willington Power Station. Within the area there are also major developments, in particular the Toyota factory near Burnaston.
- 80 Other than the River Trent the area contains few green infrastructure features.
- 81 Arguably, a green belt south of Derby would not only serve to restrict the spread of Derby but would also reinforce the separation of Derby and Burton (or in other words prevent neighbouring towns from a tendency to merge). The centres of Derby and Burton are closer than the centres of Derby and Nottingham. However, it should be noted that there is no actual threat of these two merging as they are both relatively small centres by national standards and there are no major areas of development in between in the way that Long Eaton and other urban areas exist between Derby and Nottingham.
- 82 How tightly a green belt would be drawn around the southern periphery of the City taking into consideration future development needs would be a key issue.

Any green belt should be drawn to allow for anticipated desirable development. The green belt would also need to logically relate to existing green wedges in the City. There is a concern that if the green belt is drawn too tightly the green belt would focus more development pressure on green wedges in the southern part of the City because they would have less statutory protection.

- 83 The appropriate width of a green belt in this location is another key issue. The River Trent would be a possible outer boundary of the green belt which would enable the green belt to be several miles wide south of Derby. The appropriate treatment for several villages within this area would need to be identified.

To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	XXXX
To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another	XX
To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	XXX
To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	X
To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land	XXX
Assessment of PPG2 purposes (13)	
Importance as part of green infrastructure	XX
Overall assessment (15)	MEDIUM

G. West and North-West of Derby

- 84 This area would involve a green belt to the west of Derby in South Derbyshire District and Amber Valley Borough.
- 85 There is currently no green belt to the west of Derby and a green belt would logically only be extended into this area if it were an extension of that to the north or part of a new green belt which also extended around the south. Large areas of residential development at Mickleover, Mackworth and Allestree are built out to the City boundaries and abut open countryside. The existing area of green belt ends to the north-east of Allestree. Two areas of green wedge are defined - between Mickleover and Mackworth, and at Markeaton, which link to the open countryside beyond.
- 86 The area to the west of Derby outside the urban area is characterised by open countryside with smaller settlements such as Mackworth Village, Kirk Langley, Burnaston and Etwall. Although development pressure to the west of the City has not been as great in recent years compared to the south of the City, there is a proposal for the development of 600 houses on a site adjoining the urban area at Radbourne Lane to the west of Mackworth. This is an allocation in the adopted Amber Valley Borough Local Plan 2006. This could lead to further development pressure in this area in the future, with the issue of coalescence of the urban area with Mackworth Village and Kirk Langley becoming more important.
- 87 The area north-west involves the National Trust property at Kedleston Hall which would limit the growth of Derby in this direction. Development in this area is also currently limited by policies designed to protect the setting of Kedleston Hall. A green belt could reinforce these protections. The green belt area as a whole contains a number of other features of green infrastructure

importance including several areas of Ancient Woodland and a significant number of SSSIs.

- 88 A key issue is how wide the area of green belt might be. However, the difficulty in defining green belt to the west of the City is that there are few obvious defensible outer boundaries.
- 89 In terms of inner boundaries decisions would need to be made about how tightly the inner green belt boundary was drawn around the western periphery of the urban area and how new green belt would relate to and affect the existing green wedges to the west of the City.

To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	XXX
To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another	X
To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	XXX
To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	X
To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land	XX
Assessment of PPG2 purposes (10)	
Importance as part of green infrastructure	XXX
Overall assessment (13)	MEDIUM

#### H. North-West of Amber Valley towns

- 90 This area would involve extending the green belt out beyond its current limits at Belper and Alfreton/Swanwick/Somercotes within Amber Valley Borough, and Pinxton in Bolsover District.
- 91 A green belt in this area could serve to prevent further coalescence of Alfreton, Swanwick, Somercotes and Pinxton. However, as with the area to the east around Mansfield, the purpose of doing so in a green belt which is about the Nottingham and Derby areas is unclear. A local green wedge type designation may be more appropriate if needed.
- 92 West of Belper any significant extension of the green belt would serve little purpose other than to assist in safeguarding the countryside from development of villages. The population density in this area is low and pressure for development has long been protected by environmental policies such as Special Landscape Areas.
- 93 In terms of green infrastructure, the area has a number of areas of Ancient Woodland mainly to the west of Alfreton, some SSSIs and Local Nature Reserves.
- 94 It should be recognised that the green belt as it stands around the Amber Valley towns is already remote from Derby and Nottingham, so further extension would not serve any purpose in relation to Derby and Nottingham. There would also be a problem with finding a new defensible boundary in this rural area.

To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas	X
To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another	X
To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	XXX
To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	X
To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land	X
Assessment of PPG2 purposes (7)	
Importance as part of green infrastructure	XX
Overall assessment (9)	LOW



## Summary

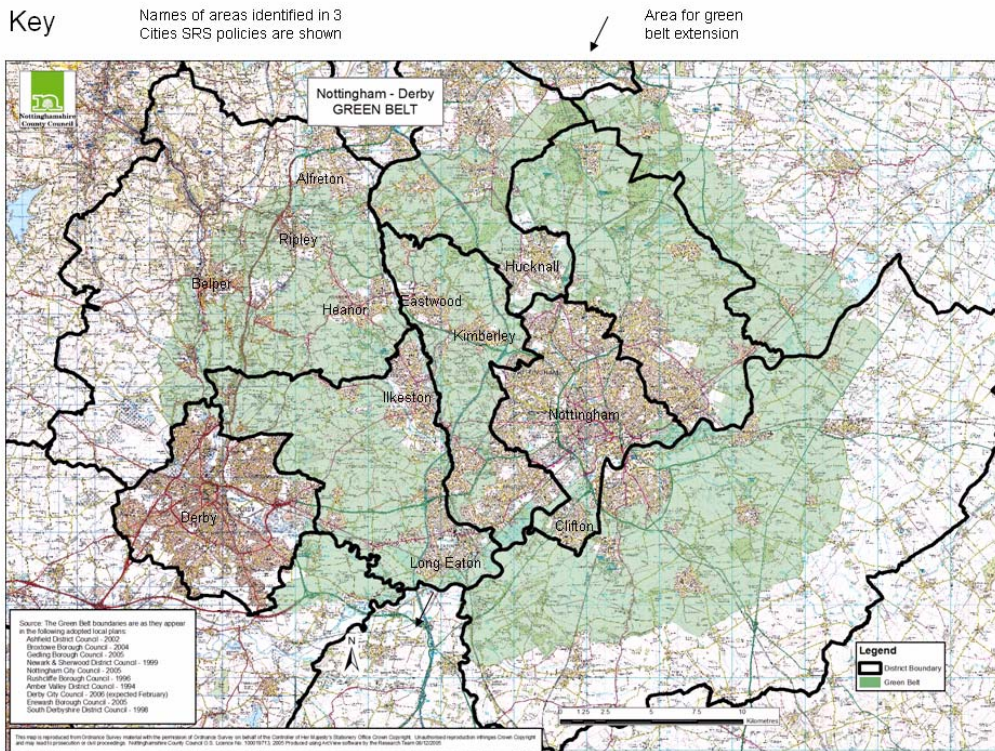
The areas are ranked in the following order:

1.	Nottingham to Ilkeston and Long Eaton	23	HIGH
2.	Derby to Long Eaton	23	HIGH
3.	Derby to Ilkeston	22	HIGH
4.	Immediate north of Derby	22	HIGH
6.	North of Eastwood, Kimberley and Hucknall	22	HIGH
5.	Amber Valley Towns	19	MEDIUM
10.	South of West Bridgford to East Leake	17	MEDIUM
7.	Ravenshead to Calverton and surrounds	16	MEDIUM
8.	East of Arnold and Carlton	16	MEDIUM
9.	East of West Bridgford to Bingham	15	MEDIUM
F.	South of Derby	15	MEDIUM
11.	Clifton and South	14	MEDIUM
G.	West and North-West of Derby	13	MEDIUM
E.	South of Long Eaton	11	MEDIUM
A.	North around Mansfield	10	LOW
B.	East around Southwell	10	LOW
C.	East around Bingham	9	LOW
H.	North-West of Amber Valley towns	9	LOW
D.	South around East Leake	8	LOW

## Conclusion

- 95 The area immediately between Nottingham and Derby and the areas immediately north are generally the most important areas of green belt. South and east of Nottingham the green belt serves fewer of the purposes set out in PPG2 because while supporting the containment of the urban area it is not separating major areas of development. The general implication of this analysis is that areas for growth to the east and south of Nottingham might impact on the green belt less than the areas for growth to the west of Nottingham. Strong reasons would be needed for any growth impacting on the existing green belt east and north of Derby given the danger of settlement coalescence to the east and the high cultural and amenity value to the north.
- 96 No possible extensions to the green belt score as highly in this analysis as the most important existing areas of green belt. However areas to the south of Long Eaton and immediately around Derby score similarly to the existing green belt areas to the south and east of Nottingham. While any decision to expand the green belt would be based on many factors, this analysis indicates that a green belt south of Long Eaton into North West Leicestershire and around Derby further into South Derbyshire District could meet a number of green belt purposes.

# Nottingham-Derby Green Belt Review



## The green belt implications of preferred areas for growth in 3 Cities Sub-Regional Strategy

Lynette Hughes  
Nottinghamshire County Council  
and  
Steve Buffery  
Derbyshire County Council  
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This is an information and discussion paper. It is the work of officers and has not been formally considered by any authority. It therefore does not represent the views of any authority or other body. Comments on the paper are welcome and can be forwarded to [lynette.hughes@nottsc.gov.uk](mailto:lynette.hughes@nottsc.gov.uk) or [steve.buffery@derbyshire.co.uk](mailto:steve.buffery@derbyshire.co.uk).

# IMPLICATIONS PAPER

## Introduction

This paper meets the final requirement set out in the project plan for completion of the Nottingham-Derby green belt review to 'comment on suggested areas for growth raised by the Three Cities Strategy Officer Group where these involve the release of green belt land'. The paper is only about the 3 Cities SRS as there are no comparable areas for growth affecting the green belt in the Northern SRS.

The paper builds on work previously been carried out on the review of the Nottingham-Derby green belt. A green belt review working paper was produced in April 2006 which explained the basis for the strategic review of the green belt, examined the historical basis for designating the Nottingham-Derby green belt, assessed the green belt policies in structure and local plans, and identified development pressures on the green belt and where green belt release might be required in the future. A second paper dated August 2006 assesses the main purposes and role of the existing green belt in the context of PPG2 and green infrastructure and what role and purpose potential extensions to the green belt might perform.

The 3 Cities Strategy Officer Group has now prepared a draft SRS which includes housing strategies for the Derby, Leicester and Nottingham Core HMAs based on an assessment of a number of development 'choices'. The SRS provides the district level apportionments of housing development within each Housing Market Area (HMA) and identifies broad locations where development should be focussed. This paper assesses the implications of the HMA strategies on the existing extent of the Nottingham-Derby green belt and the case for designating new areas of green belt.

## Nottingham Core Housing Market Area

### The Strategy

The strategy recognises that the Nottingham Core HMA contains significant areas of green belt. A significant proportion of development is expected within the Nottingham PUA and other existing urban areas. Urban extensions will be subject to consideration of their impact on the green belt.

The green belt review identified the area immediately between Nottingham and Derby and the areas immediately on the northern side of the HMA as the most important areas of green belt. South of Nottingham the green belt serves fewer purposes because it is not separating major areas of development. The strategy favours growth to the south of Nottingham in recognition of this.

### Nottingham City

It is anticipated that Nottingham City will cater for development within the existing urban area without any need for incursions into the small areas of green belt within the City. There are considerable opportunities for regeneration within Nottingham

City, particularly in relation to proposals for Eastside, Riverside and Southside, which encompass both housing and commercial development.

### Broxtowe

In Broxtowe Borough development is proposed to be located in or adjacent to the Nottingham PUA which includes Beeston and Stapleford and to support the settlements at Eastwood and Kimberley. There is some urban capacity within these areas as identified in the local plan adopted in 2004, but the proposals are for higher housing numbers than identified at that time. Any need to expand outside of the current urban areas will require the release of green belt land. The green belt review indicates that the green belt in Broxtowe is by and large the most important area of green belt therefore any extensions will need to be carefully considered and should be limited in extent.

### Erewash

The proposals limit growth in Erewash Borough, and it is expected that growth will be focussed in Long Eaton and Ilkeston. Given the tight green belt boundaries around existing urban areas and villages, it might still be challenge to find sufficient urban capacity for the amount of new housing expected over the next 20 years. It may be that there will be a need to accommodate housing on the Stanton Ironworks site, which is currently identified for employment but a current Area Action Plan raises the possibility of some housing. The SRS states that Local Development Documents should examine the case for supporting regeneration through brownfield redevelopment on this site. Reliance on Stanton Ironworks poses considerable challenges however given the costs of restoration, the location separated from existing urban areas and access difficulties. It should also be noted that the Stanton Ironworks site has green belt boundaries and any development will need to be sensitive to the potential effects on the openness of the green belt. If there is a need for the release of green belt land within Erewash Borough, then it will be up to the local development framework process to find suitable small areas.

### Gedling

Gedling Borough's capacity for growth is better than other districts in that the local plan adopted in 2005 contains a number of areas of safeguarded land. These areas include part of the former Gedling Colliery and an area to the north of Hucknall (Top Wighay Farm) taking advantage of the NET and the Robin Hood Line. Beyond the existing identified areas the green belt is however important, particularly where it reflects high landscape quality and helps to separate villages. It is understood that the strategy anticipates that the amount of required development should be able to be catered for on land already identified for development, although there remains the possibility of urban extensions and brownfield redevelopment which would need to be identified in areas where the green belt is less important.

### Rushcliffe

The strategy identifies the need for growth within or adjoining the Nottingham PUA within Rushcliffe Borough. A manor sustainable urban extension to the south of Clifton is required recognising existing and planned infrastructure and the relationship

to NEMA. The pressures for growth in Rushcliffe have been noted in the green belt review, for example in the discussion about Nottingham starting at paragraph 148 in the April Working Paper. Since then, Rushcliffe Borough has not been able to complete its local plan and currently has no areas identified for growth. The review identifies the green belt south of Nottingham as being less sensitive than many other areas of green belt. Given the need to provide for growth, it is consistent with the results of the green belt review to require increased capacity in this area. Where the green belt boundary is to be moved, it will be important to create new defensible boundaries.

## **Derby Housing Market Area**

### The Strategy

The strategy recognises the importance of the green belt to the east and north of Derby. The Derby PUA is anticipated to grow only to the south (apart from a small existing provision to the north). Otherwise, growth will be focussed on Swadlincote (outside of the Nottingham-Derby green belt), Heanor, Belper, Ripley and Alfreton.

An extension of the green belt to encompass areas in North West Leicestershire and South Derbyshire is envisaged, but the precise boundaries of this extension will be the subject of further study by the two local authorities affected and Derby City Council.

### Derby City

Derby City contains few areas of green belt but also has identified green wedges which separate suburban areas and link to the countryside outside of the City's boundaries. While the strategy anticipates a considerable amount of housing development, it is understood that this should be accommodated within the existing urban area and growth should not impact on either the green belt or green wedges.

### Amber Valley

There are significant constraints to the extension of the Derby PUA into Amber Valley such as the setting of Kedleston Hall, grade 1 agricultural land and good quality landscape. Parts of the area are protected by green belt and there is also the need to protect the open 'mouths' of green wedges with the City. The strategy envisages growth of the Derby PUA in this area only to the extent that it has already been agreed in the Amber Valley Borough Local Plan 2006.

The strategy requires some housing development in Heanor, Belper, Ripley and Alfreton with urban extensions as necessary. Heanor and Ripley are entirely surrounded by green belt. Belper is surrounded either by green belt or special landscape area designations. The southern edge of Alfreton is limited by green belt. All of these towns have been subject to development pressure, and green belt boundaries have been an important local issue. This was discussed in the April Working Paper starting at paragraph 183. The green belt serves an important role in helping to separate these towns, but overall, given the distance from Derby and Nottingham, the green belt is not as important here as elsewhere. It is therefore consistent with the green belt review to allow for some growth in these towns,

although any proposals to release green belt land for urban extensions will need to be carefully considered with regard to the local importance of particular areas of green belt. It is anticipated that the majority of development will still be accommodated within the existing urban areas.

### South Derbyshire

Parts of the Derby PUA have already extended into South Derbyshire and the strategy allows for a limited amount of further extensions. It is expected that the growth will take place in locations other than those covered by green belt.

The green belt review assesses the potential for extending the green belt around Derby. Extending the green belt in South Derbyshire could serve a number of purposes such as protecting the countryside and encouraging regeneration of land in Derby City. However, any green belt boundary would need to be drawn to cater for anticipated desirable development. The strategy allows for extending the green belt, subject to further study, although it is anticipated that areas south-east of Derby will be preferred to the area directly south where growth is anticipated.

## **Leicester Housing Market Area**

### The Strategy

There is no green belt in Leicestershire at the moment but the strategy envisages extending the Nottingham-Derby green belt into North West Leicestershire south of Long Eaton. The key areas for urban extension in the Leicester HMA are not in the area south of Long Eaton.

### North West Leicestershire

Extending the green belt into North West Leicestershire will allow for the green belt to become several miles wide, rather than very narrow as it currently is south of Long Eaton. The green belt review highlights a number of issues that will need to be considered however so that an appropriate boundary can be determined. It is not anticipated that Nottingham East Midlands Airport will be affected, however consultation with the airport authorities will be required. The effect on settlements in the vicinity as well as other land which might otherwise be earmarked for development will need to be considered at a local level.

## **Conclusion**

The strategies contained within the SRS have been prepared taking into account the outcomes of the green belt review and are broadly consistent with it.

The strategies do not rule out the possibility of needing to release green belt land in Broxtowe, Erewash and Gedling even though the green belt review indicates that the green belt is particularly important in these areas. Recognition of the importance of the green belt is however reflected in the relatively low housing provision levels in these areas.

Growth in Heanor, Belper, Ripley and Alfreton has the potential to impact on the green belt. Given the remoteness from Nottingham and Derby, minor releases of green belt land will not have strategic significance, but local issues will need to be carefully considered.

Extending Nottingham to the south (within Rushcliffe Borough) and Derby to the south (within South Derbyshire District) recognises that these areas either contain less important green belt land than elsewhere, or have no green belt at all. South of Derby the green belt review assesses the potential for a green belt at about the same level of importance as current areas of green belt south of Nottingham.

Extending the green belt into North West Leicestershire and further into South Derbyshire is not intended to impact on important areas identified for growth. Local study will need to be undertaken between Councils and in consultation with interested parties in order to define appropriate defensible boundaries.