

National Planning Policy – December 2024 (as amended)

NPPF _Para 151

Once Green Belts have been defined, local planning authorities should plan positively to enhance their beneficial use, such as looking for opportunities to provide access; to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation; to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity; or to improve damaged and derelict land. Where Green Belt land is released for development through plan preparation or review, the ‘Golden Rules’ in paragraph 156 below should apply.

On February 27th, grey belt was further defined and it is now clearly stated that

Today’s guidance spells out that villages do not count as “large built-up areas” for green belt assessment purposes, and that the green belt purpose of preventing coalescence of towns does not relate to villages. It also establishes that the green belt purpose of preserving the setting and special character of historic towns does not relate to villages.

This represents a sea change in the analysis of sustainable sites adjoining villages

Golden Rules – NPPF Dec 2024

155. The development of homes, commercial and other development in the Green Belt should also **not** be regarded as inappropriate where:

- a. The development would utilise grey belt land and would not fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan;
- b. There is a demonstrable unmet need for the type of development proposed
- c. The development would be in a sustainable location, with particular reference to paragraphs 110 and 115 of this Framework.
- d. Where applicable the development proposed meets the ‘Golden Rules’ requirements set out in paragraphs 156-157 below.

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

- a. affordable housing which reflects either: (i) development plan policies produced in accordance with paragraphs 67-68 of this Framework; or (ii) until such policies are in place, the policy set out in paragraph 157 below;

b. necessary improvements to local or national infrastructure; and

c. the provision of new, or improvements to existing, green spaces that are accessible to the public. New residents should be able to access good quality green spaces within a short walk of their home, whether through onsite provision or through access to offsite spaces.

157. Before development plan policies for affordable housing are updated in line with paragraphs 67-68 of this Framework, the affordable housing contribution required to satisfy the Golden Rules is 15 percentage points above the highest existing affordable housing requirement which would otherwise apply to the development, subject to a cap of 50%⁶⁰. In the absence of a pre-existing requirement for affordable housing, a 50% affordable housing contribution should apply by default. The use of site-specific viability assessment for land within or released from the Green Belt should be subject to the approach set out in national planning practice guidance on viability.

158. A development which complies with the Golden Rules should be given significant weight in favour of the grant of permission.

159. The improvements to green spaces required as part of the Golden Rules should contribute positively to the landscape setting of the development, support nature recovery and meet local standards for green space provision where these exist in the development plan. Where no locally specific standards exist, development proposals should meet national standards relevant to the development (these include Natural England standards on accessible green space and urban greening factor and Green Flag criteria). Where land has been identified as having particular potential for habitat creation or nature recovery within Local Nature Recovery Strategies, proposals should contribute towards these outcomes.

73. Smaller Sites

Small and medium sized sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area, are essential for Small and Medium Enterprise housebuilders to deliver new homes, and are often built-out relatively quickly.

To promote the development of a good mix of sites local planning authorities should:

- a) identify, through the development plan and brownfield registers, land to accommodate at least 10% of their housing requirement on sites no larger than one hectare; unless it can be shown, through the preparation of relevant plan policies, that there are strong reasons why this 10% target cannot be achieved;

Sustainability

110. The planning system should actively manage patterns of growth in support of these objectives. Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions, and

improve air quality and public health. However, opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making.

115. In assessing sites that may be allocated for development in plans, or specific applications for development, it should be ensured that:
- a) sustainable transport modes are prioritised taking account of the vision for the site, the type of development and its location;
 - b) safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users;