

Matter 15 – Countryside and Green Belt : the policy approach to the Green Belt, Rural Areas beyond the Green Belt and Urban Open Land		
Action	Date on which Action Completed	Examination Doc Reference No.
NHDC to replace reference at paragraph 4.56 of the explanatory text to ‘national guidance’ with ‘national policy’	MM025	
NHDC to propose amendment to Policy SP5(d) to add reference to “...through the application of our detailed policies” or similar	MM023	
NHDC to amend references to proposals map throughout the Plan to ‘policies map’	Included in Schedule of Proposed Modifications, listed against the respective paragraphs throughout the Plan	
NHDC to propose amendments to Policy CGB1(a) and (b) such that they are consistent with Policy SP2	MM104	
NHDC to amend references to the description of the rural area beyond the GB such that it is not limited to rural areas to the east (see e.g. paragraph 6.1)	MM105	
NHDC to propose amendments to Policy CGB2 as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove bullet point relating to Category C settlements • Add wording such as “Development permitted under SP2 will also need to meet the criteria set out above”. • Add wording to make clear that exception sites in the GB need to meet the NPPF test of VSC NHDC to generally reconsider Policy CGB2 in light of paragraph 89 NPPF and to consider whether the policy needs to be split to relate to GB and rural areas separately	MM108 Supporting note enclosed as Appendix M15-1	ED152

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Action	Date on which Action Completed	Examination Doc Reference No.
NHDC to consider amendment to Policy CGB3 to include provision for new homes to support rural businesses on a temporary basis and to make clear where policy applies and in what circumstances	MM112	
NHDC to consider recasting Policy CGB4 to separate out conversions and extensions as well as GB and rural area beyond the GB	MM114 Supporting note enclosed as Appendix M15-1	ED152
NHDC to amend policies map in respect of urban open land	MM384	

Appendix M15-1

ED152 : Covering note on proposed Matter 15 modifications

North Hertfordshire District Council Local Plan Examination

Note to Inspector

Countryside and Green Belt policies – explanatory note

1. Following the Matter 15 hearings session, the Inspector has requested that the Council consider a number of modifications to the Countryside and Green Belt policies of the plan. These are set out in the actions arising from Week 3 of the hearing sessions (ED55, p.3)
2. In particular, the Inspector advised that for a number of the policies the Council should consider ‘disaggregating’ those elements of the policies relating to the Green Belt and Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt to separately assess their effectiveness and / or compliance with the relevant elements of national policy. Following this exercise, consideration should be given to whether it would be effective to ‘re-aggregate’ these into a single policy.
3. A number of modifications have been proposed for the Inspector’s consideration. This short note contains an explanation of the rationale for the approaches to Policies CGB2 and CGB4.

Policy CGB2

4. The Council considers the most appropriate approach for this policy is to split it into two parts dealing with the Green Belt (proposed Policy CGB2a) and Rural Area beyond the Green Belt (proposed Policy CGB2a) respectively.
5. The definition of development which is not inappropriate in the Green Belt is tightly prescribed by the NPPF. Proposed Policy CGB2a therefore specifically addresses the second part of the fifth bullet point under paragraph 89 of the NPPF:

A local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. Exceptions to this are...limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the Local Plan.

6. Proposed Policy CGB2b sets out a slightly more permissive exceptions policy for the Rural Area beyond the Green Belt. This takes account of relevant advice in the NPPF applicable to rural areas including, but not necessarily strictly limited to:
 - Promoting the retention and development of local services and community facilities in villages (NPPF paragraph 28, fourth bullet);
 - Being responsive to local housing needs, particularly for affordable housing, including through rural exception sites where appropriate. This includes consideration of whether allowing some market housing would facilitate the provision of significant additional affordable housing to meet local needs (NPPF paragraph 54); and

- Planning positively for the provision and use of shared space, community facilities and other local services (NPPF paragraph 70, first bullet).
7. The proposed advice in Paragraph 6.9 regarding travel times to potential alternate sites is a matter of planning judgement. This is proposed having regard, in particular, to the current provision of rural bus services across the District including routes and timetables.

Policy CGB4

8. This policy has been amended to refer to the Rural Area beyond the Green Belt only.
9. Concern was expressed at the examination over the consistency of the policy as submitted with national policy regarding the extension, re-use and redevelopment of buildings in the Green Belt.
10. The policy and associated supporting text have been amended to make clear that the Council will rely upon the policies in paragraphs 89 and 90 the NPPF in concert with the plan's detailed design policies to consider proposals for the re-use, replacement or extension of buildings in the Green Belt.
11. This revised approach also accords with guidance that there should be no need to reiterate policies that are already set out in the National Planning Policy Framework¹.

¹ Planning Practice Guidance, Local Plans: How detailed should a Local Plan be, Paragraph: 010 Reference ID: 12-010-20140306, <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/local-plans--2>