

Parish Councils
By email only

1 August 2018

Re: Green Belt policy in the new Local Plan

Dear Parish Council,

I am writing to advise you of changes to our approach in considering planning applications relating to extensions to and replacement of buildings within the identified settlement areas within the Green Belt.

As you know under the current Local Plan 2003, Policy RE3 lists a number of villages in the Green Belt that have an identified settlement boundary and within which limited infilling is permitted. Linked to this are Policies H6 and H9, which set criteria for replacement dwellings and extensions to dwellings. These policies set out the restriction that replacement dwellings cannot be materially larger than the original dwelling and that any extensions must not be disproportionate. However, at the end of both policies, it states that these restrictions **do not apply** within the identified settlement boundary. We have been aware that this element is not wholly compliant with the NPPF since its inception in 2012, however, given the standing of the Local Plan officers have continued to apply this stance to application. When tested at appeal, in most cases Inspectors have accepted the reasoning and reliance on policies in the 2003 local plan. This emphasis and reliance on the 2003 plan has now changed.

The new Local Plan has recently been through a series of hearing sessions during which the appointed independent Inspector has assessed whether the submitted Local Plan is sound. At the end of the hearing sessions in July, the Inspector concluded that the plan is sound, subject to a number of major modifications. The Council is currently drafting these major modifications and, once these are agreed with the Inspector, will undertake consultation on them. This is currently expected to take place in September/October. In the main, these major modifications carry very little weight as they are still subject to consultation and therefore potential change. However, those aspects of the plan that the Inspector has deemed to be sound and require no further change will now carry *considerable* weight for the purposes of decision taking.

One such aspect of the plan is the approach to Green Belt. The new Local Plan includes a number of villages, which are proposed to be removed (or 'inset') from the Green Belt. The remaining villages will be considered to have 'full' Green Belt status as the NPPF does not allow local policies to relax

certain Green Belt areas.


This means that any planning applications submitted within areas proposed to be removed from the Green Belt will **not** be subject to any Green Belt policy considerations (e.g. that any replacement buildings are not materially larger, any extensions are not disproportionate and that any infilling is limited in nature). Determination will be in line with normal development management considerations and any other relevant policy designations such as conservation areas/AONB.

In contrast, any applications that are submitted in those villages remaining washed over by the Green Belt, or are outside of the inset boundaries will be subject to full Green Belt policy considerations. Whilst some of the villages NOT to be inset will be designated with a village boundary within the policies map, this does not alter their Green Belt status.

This change in stance is also timely with the recent publication of the revised NPPF which provided several updates to national policy but reiterated the position regarding Green Belt development.

We understand that this will represent a significant shift to how some applications are considered, this will mainly be in the smaller villages NOT proposed to be inset. Should Councillors have any questions regarding this, officers both within the Policy and Development Management teams will be happy to assist.

Yours Sincerely,



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