



We care for the Chilterns

Planning Guidance Statement on Development within the Green Belt and AONB

(Adapted 2018 from document approved by Executive Council in 2016)

The Society should oppose development within, or affecting the setting of, the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), which fails to conserve or enhance its natural beauty.

As a consequence, to be acceptable, new development within the AONB should be small-scale and restricted to land within existing settlements or on brownfield sites (areas previously used for development).

The Society should oppose development in the existing Green Belt which fails to protect its openness, or undermines its five purposes (to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas; to prevent neighbouring towns 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).

The Society should also oppose changes to Green Belt boundaries, unless the land to be removed from the Green Belt clearly no longer fulfils the purposes of Green Belt.

The use of unmet housing need as a justification for amending Green Belt boundaries should be robustly challenged.

Where proposals exist to remove land from the Green Belt, the Society should also assess other potential adverse impacts of development – for example damage to the AONB or its setting, or, more generally, on landscape, biodiversity, heritage, or any other aspect of sustainability – so that appropriate comments are made on these aspects alongside any in-principle Green Belt objection.

If land is, or is potentially, to be removed from the Green Belt to accommodate unmet housing need, the Society should seek to ensure that only development of a type that will genuinely meet that need is allowed, for example affordable housing for local needs.

Where land is to be removed from the Green Belt, the Society should seek the creation of an equivalent area of new Green Belt.