

Green Belt includes all the land as far west as the River Severn, but excludes the towns of Kidderminster, Stourport-on-Severn and Bewdley and the smaller settlements of Blakedown, Cookley, Fairfield and Wilden.

7.4 The essential characteristic of Green Belts is their permanence and their protection must be maintained as far as can be seen ahead. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. Green Belts help to protect the countryside, and can assist in moving towards more sustainable patterns of urban development. The inclusion of land in Green Belts is of paramount importance to their continued protection and it is important that the visual amenities of the Green Belt are not damaged by proposals for development within or conspicuous from the Green Belt.

7.5 PPG2 - Green Belts, states that existing Green Belts should not be changed unless exceptional circumstances exist which necessitate such revision. The District Council's Adopted Core Strategy sets the Development Strategy for the District and it was concluded through the Adopted Core Strategy process that no such circumstances exist to justify a review of the Green Belt boundary. Therefore, the existing boundary will be maintained.

7.6 Both PPG2 - Green Belts and PPG17 - Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation, recognise that outdoor sport is one of the uses of land which can be appropriate within the Green Belt. Within the District's Green Belt, there is a concentration of outdoor sports facilities on the Minster Road. Because Green Belt areas by their nature are located close to towns, they can play a valuable role in opening up access to the open countryside for urban populations.

7.7 The District Council has identified a small number of Major Developed Sites within the Green Belt. The policy framework for further development at these sites or for their redevelopment is set out within Annex C of PPG2 - Green Belts. Further site specific policies for each of the sites are set out within Part B of this document.

Green Belt - Areas of Development Restraint

7.8 ADRs are areas of land which are taken out of the Green Belt to meet longer-term housing needs. The ADRs are treated as Green Belt land until they are allocated for development through the plan-making process.

Policy 21

Areas of Development Restraint

Land within those Areas of Development Restraint (ADRs) as shown on the Proposals Map will not be released unless or until identified in a future review of the Development Plan.

In the interim period, proposals for development will be assessed against the Green Belt policies of the Local Development Framework.

7.9 Paragraph 2.12 of PPG2 - Green Belts, specifies that:

7.10 *"When local planning authorities prepare new or revised structure or local plans, any proposals affecting Green Belts should be related to a time-scale which is longer than that normally adopted for other aspects of the plan. They should satisfy themselves that Green Belt*

boundaries will not need to be altered at the end of the plan period. In order to ensure protection of Green Belts within this longer timescale, this will in some cases mean safeguarding land between the urban area and the Green Belt which may be required to meet longer-term development needs."

7.11 Provision for longer-term development was therefore made in the 1996 Adopted Local Plan through the adoption of a number of Areas of Development Restraint (ADRs). The ADRs provide the first option to consider development if sites are not available to meet the desired requirement in other, sequentially preferable locations.

7.12 With the exception of Blakedown, it is proposed to maintain the current ADR sites. The Blakedown Nurseries site is a derelict nursery with extensive hardstanding and outbuildings which has suffered from antisocial behaviour issues. Furthermore there is an established local need identified through the Parish Housing Needs Survey and no other site within the settlement inset is considered suitable to meet this need. Further details can be found in the Blakedown Nurseries Policy in Part B.

7.13 Elsewhere, the Site Allocations and Policies and Kidderminster Central Area Action Plan DPDs have identified sites, in sequentially preferable locations, that are considered to be available to meet the desired quantum of development indicated in the Adopted Core Strategy. It is therefore proposed that the ADRs continue to remain in the Green Belt as per the Adopted Local Plan (2004).

18 Rural

18.1 The provision of housing in the rural areas of the District, will be limited in order to safeguard the landscape character and not detract from urban regeneration. The following sites are proposed for affordable housing. All the sites are located within settlement boundaries.

Blakedown Nurseries

- Area: 1.34ha

18.2 The largest rural site within a settlement boundary which provides an opportunity for residential redevelopment is the Blakedown Nurseries site on Belbroughton Road in Blakedown. The following policy is proposed as a preferred option:

Policy 54

Blakedown Nurseries - (SAL.RS.1)

Residential development (C3) at this site will be supported subject to the following:

- Development must provide for the local affordable housing need as set out within the latest Parish Housing Needs Survey.
- Enabling market housing may be permitted if justified by a robust viability assessment.
- Development must not have a detrimental impact on the adjacent Special Wildlife Site.
- Development should provide strong pedestrian and, where possible, visual linkages to the adjacent open space.

18.3 The site is being suggested because there is an identified need for affordable housing within Blakedown and this site is considered to be the preferred site for the delivery of housing to meet that need. However, the site is considered too large to come forward for 100% affordable housing. Development proposals for anything other than affordable housing should have regard to the Rural Housing and Financial Viability Policies (see Part A Policies 2 and 3). A Parish Housing Needs Survey has recently been undertaken.

18.4 The site is in a sustainable location; it is within 5 minutes walk of a local shop and within 10 minutes walk of the railway station which provides frequent services to Kidderminster/Worcester and Birmingham. Blakedown is identified as a village within the Adopted Core Strategy Settlement Hierarchy. Housing to meet local needs is one of the types of development which is identified as being appropriate within villages.

18.5 The site is defined as greenfield by nature of its previous use as a commercial plant nursery. However, there are large areas of hard standing. The majority of the derelict greenhouses on the site have now been cleared as the site has been a target for anti-social behaviour since the nursery closed.

18.6 The site is adjacent to the the parish rooms and scout hut car park with the Millennium Green and Churchill and Blakedown Valleys Special Wildlife Site beyond. It is important to maintain the screening of the site from the car park and Green and to restrict any surface run-off into the Forge Pool.

18.7 The relevant policies within the Adopted Core Strategy include:

- DS01: Development Locations
- DS04: Rural Regeneration
- CP14: Providing Opportunities for Local Biodiversity and Geodiversity

