



Press release

New rules further strengthen green belt protections

From: Department for Communities and Local Government (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-communities-and-local-government>) and The Rt Hon Eric Pickles MP (<https://www.gov.uk/government/people/eric-pickles>)

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Part of: Improving the energy efficiency of buildings and using planning to protect the environment (<https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/improving-the-energy-efficiency-of-buildings-and-using-planning-to-protect-the-environment>), Making the planning system work more efficiently and effectively (<https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/making-the-planning-system-work-more-efficiently-and-effectively>), Reducing and managing waste (<https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/reducing-and-managing-waste>), Climate change (<https://www.gov.uk/government/topics/dimate-change>), Environment (<https://www.gov.uk/government/topics/environment>) and Planning and building (<https://www.gov.uk/government/topics/planning-and-building>) + others

Eric Pickles takes new steps to further enhance the strong protections in place against development on green belt land.



The Communities Secretary today (16 October 2014) strengthened the policy on planning for waste facilities such as recycling plants making clear that companies and councils looking to build these should first look for suitable sites and areas on brownfield land.

Today's new rules (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-for-waste>) also changes the previous policy, and means councils can no longer give special consideration to locational needs, or wider economic benefits the site could bring, over other considerations, as justification for building waste facilities on green belt land.

Mr Pickles said these measures would ensure the green belt could continue to offer a "strong defence" against urban sprawl in our towns and cities, and brings waste into line with the policies on other development, where approval should only be given in very special circumstances, and brownfield sites should be sought in the first instance.

Protecting the green belt

Today's new policy follows new guidance (<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/councils-must-protect-our-precious-green-belt-land>) published earlier this month, which reaffirms how councils should use their local plan, drawing on protections in the National Planning Policy Framework (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>), to protect the green lungs around towns and cities.

Green belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional cases, through the preparation or review of the Local Plan.

This is on top of a range of measures the government has already taken to protect the green belt. These include:

- abolishing the previous administration's top-down regional strategies
- selling surplus brownfield land for redevelopment

- introducing more flexible planning rights so empty and underused buildings can be brought back into productive use

Local Plans are now at the heart of the reformed, democratic planning system, so councils can decide where development should and shouldn't go in consultation with local people.

Communities Secretary Eric Pickles said:

“ I am crystal clear that the green belt must be protected from development, so it can continue to offer a strong defence against urban sprawl.

Today's new rules strengthen these protections further, and ensure that whether it's new homes, business premises or anything else, developers first look for suitable sites on brownfield land.”

Further information

The new waste planning policy and guidance (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-for-waste>) has been published today on this website.

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