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**01727 819344 or 819345**



The District Council Offices textphone number is **01727 819570**. The service is for customers with a hearing impairment.

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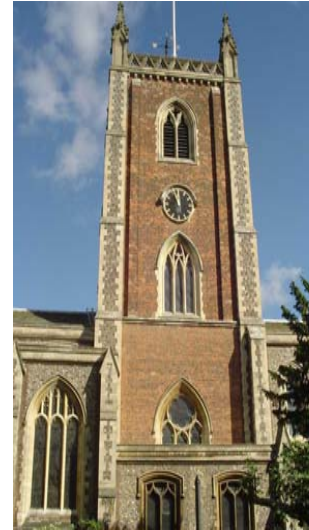
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Planning Advisory Leaflet



## GREEN BELT AND DEVELOPMENT: WHAT IS PERMITTED

Green Belts are a major success of post-war town and country planning. This leaflet outlines their purpose.

### The history

Back in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, when town planning was recognised as a means of dealing with the crowded and unhealthy living conditions in cities, Ebenezer Howard created the 'garden city'. A general strategy developed, which envisaged city living areas as a series of communities that were clean, green and spacious, and separated by a 'green backcloth' of farmland, forest and parks. Welwyn Garden City and Letchworth came into being.

### The purpose of the Green Belt

Green Belts have since been adapted to modern conditions. Their five main purposes are:

- to check the unrestricted sprawls of large built-up areas;
- to prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another;
- to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns;
- to assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

### What Green Belts mean to you

Once Green Belts have been defined, they have a positive role to play in fulfilling the following objectives:

- to provide opportunities for access to the countryside for the urban population;
- to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation;
- to retain and enhance landscapes near to where people live;
- to secure nature conservation;
- to retain land in agricultural, forestry and related uses.

### Green Belts today

There are now 14 separate Green Belts surrounding nearly all of England's major towns and cities. Where there is a potential for separate towns to merge into each other, Green Belts protect their individuality and provide a breathing space. They cover 12% of England, and by restricting development they affect what happens elsewhere. For example, development of new factories and offices may be redirected to the inner city areas where they are most needed.

### Is development prohibited in Green Belts ?

In the main, yes. Inside a Green Belt, approval should not be given, except in very special circumstances, for the construction of new buildings, or the change of use of existing buildings, for purposes other than agricultural and forestry, outdoor sport or other uses appropriate to the rural area. Any proposal should not have a material impact on the openness of the Green Belt.

Other proposals for development are likely to be refused permission unless very special circumstances apply. For instance, some developments need to fulfil specific operational requirements, such as power stations, mining, etc. Others are in the national interest, such as prisons and military installations; these are the exceptions rather than the rule.

There are also controls over the size of extensions allowed to dwellings in the Green Belt and restrictions on the use of replacement dwellings, including those within Green Belt settlements.

### Are all Green Belts the same?

Yes, in principle, but not in detail. While National Green Belt policy applies to each of them, local circumstances must be taken into account. Policies limiting development vary according to local needs. This Council's policies are set out in the St Albans District Local Plan Review 1994, which is available for public inspection and on the Council's website: [www.stalbans.gov.uk](http://www.stalbans.gov.uk).

## Are Green Belt boundaries permanent?

They are generally set for the foreseeable future but are not necessarily permanent. Changes to the boundaries respond to the needs, pressure and particularly the increasing mobility of urban populations. Inner Green Belt boundaries may change where the Council and Government are convinced that the re-use of derelict land will not be sufficient to meet all the area's needs, in particular the need for housing. Once the general extent of a Green Belt has been approved, it should be altered only in exceptional circumstances. A full public consultation on an amendment has to take place, usually as part of the Local Development Framework and Development Plan process.

## Finding out about your Green Belt

The whole of St Albans District lies within the Green Belt except the following:

- the City of St Albans;
- Harpenden and the larger settlements such as Wheathampstead, Redbourn, Park Street, Bricket Wood, Chiswell Green and London Colney;
- some industrial/warehousing estates such as Buncefield and North-East Hemel Hempstead.

The following smaller villages are located in the Green Belt and are known as Green Belt settlements:

- Annables, Kinsbourne Green;
- Colney Heath;
- Sandridge;
- Folly Fields;
- Gustard Wood;
- Lea Valley Estate;
- Radlett Road, Frogmore;
- Sleepshyde;
- Smallford.

## Further information

This advisory leaflet is intended to be a helpful and useful source of information and not binding on any party. The Council offers no guarantee or warranties concerning the accuracy of the information supplied.

For more information about the contents of this leaflet contact:

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