

1. Introduction	2
2. Policy Context	2
3. Background	3	
4. Sustainability Appraisal to inform the Adopted BLP	5	
5. Existing Site Allocations for land taken out of the Green Belt	6	
6. SA and Considerations for the BLP Review	6	
7. Call for Sites Evidence	8	
8. Responses to BDP Review Issues and Options Consultation	9	
9. BCC's Position on Green Belt Review	12	
10. Conclusion	13	



Green Belt Background Paper

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This background paper reviews the policy and options around Green Belt available to the Council to inform the Local Plan Review and Preferred Options consultation. It reconsiders the conclusions of the Council's last Green Belt Review and examines the latest evidence and consultation responses.





Archaeology and Historic Environment Assessment (BCC).

Stage 2 resulted in a shortlist of areas or sub areas for further consideration as SUE and a large employment site.

- 3.5 Stage 3 assessed the shortlisted areas/ sub areas against a set of selected criteria and scored them according to their performance against key indicators including the extent to which identified impacts/ issues could be mitigated. A comparison of the shortlisted areas was made, resulting in a final recommendation on the preferred option for a sustainable urban extension and an employment site.
- 3.6 The following paragraphs are quoted from the Inspector's Report (March 2016) following the Examination into the current Birmingham Development Plan. Paragraph 142 of the Inspector's Report (March 2016) states:

- 3.7 Paragraph 169 of the Inspectors Report states:

- 3.8 Paragraph 216 states:



4. Sustainability Appraisal to inform the Adopted BDP

- 4.1 The Sustainability Appraisal Draft report acknowledged the likely significant positive effects of further Green Belt release (Option 6) on housing supply, whilst also stating that it is likely to have negative effects on land, soil and the natural landscape and negative effects on air quality and carbon emissions due to the relative remoteness of potential sites from existing employment and centres.
- 4.2 It stated that if development is to take the form of a large-scale urban extension, these could provide new community services and infrastructure which could reduce reliance on cars and facilitate a modal shift. That said, the overall scale of growth proposed will inevitably lead to increased vehicular traffic and congestion with associated increases in emissions. The SA predicted that residual negative effects are likely to remain. This stage of the assessment was carried out on a non-site-specific basis. The Inspector considered this was appropriate given that its purpose was to test alternative scales of development at the strategic level. Specific comparisons between potential SUE sites were carried out at the subsequent stage.
- 4.3 In the SA, the 500-3,000 dwelling option scored significantly worse than the other options against the group of objectives concerning sustainable transport and climate change. This is largely because developments of that size are seen as having difficulty, whether individually or in combination, in supporting the level of public transport and other facilities (schools, shops etc) needed to keep traffic growth within acceptable limits. In view of the substantial public transport investment likely to be needed in a SUE, and the evidence on the scale of development needed to support local facilities including a secondary school, the Inspector considered this to be a justified conclusion.
- 4.4 The Inspector stated in para. 156 of his report that



relatively small amount. Splitting development between two sites, both delivering below full capacity, would create a substantial risk to the delivery of public transport and other infrastructure.

5. Existing Allocations for sites taken out of the Green Belt

5.1 Outline planning permission for the development of the Langley Sustainable Urban Extension was resolved to be granted, subject to a S106 agreement, by Planning Committee in December 2022. It is anticipated that construction will commence in 2025 and continue until around 2040. The development will be undertaken on a rolling programme of site preparation and construction, allowing earlier phases to be completed and occupied whilst subsequent phases are constructed. It is anticipated that the first dwellings are likely to be completed within 12 months of the first development works commencing.

5.2 As set out above, the Inspector supported the development of 5,000 dwellings at Langley. He strongly expressed that there is a significant risk that allocating more than one SUE site for development will result in this SUE delivering at well below the potential maximum output and that this risks delaying the investment in public transport, schools and other facilities that are necessary to limit traffic growth at the new developments. The Council considers that this remains a very real risk to Birmingham's future development strategy as the Langley SUE is yet to be built out. The viability and marketing practicalities of releasing green belt land in the northeast (where the majority of green belt land is located) will be undermined by the fact that there still remains 5-6,000 dwellings at Langley SUE which have yet to be delivered.

5.3 A hybrid planning consent for an employment park at Peddimore was approved in August 2019. Construction of the first building is complete and is now occupied and operated by Amazon providing about 1,470 full time equivalent jobs. Approval for a warehouse on the remainder of Development Zone 1A was approved in May 2022, the building is yet to commence construction.

5.4 Planning permission was granted in July 2019 for around 300 homes on the Former Yardley Sewage Works.

6. Sustainability Appraisal and Considerations for the BLP Review

Draft SA Report BDP Review February 2024 (Regulation 18)

6.1 Paragraph 8.1 of the Draft SA Report states "when developing the options/policies, the following high-level recommendations were proposed as a results of the Interim SA Findings. The accessibility of some Green Belt areas is poorer than the urban areas. Small scale incremental growth in such locations would likely result in increased car trips and for poor access to services and should be avoided in such instances. Green Belt should only be released in exceptional circumstances where the locations are sustainable or can be made so, which is more likely to be achieved through a SUE."



Appraisal Topics	The Draft Plan	Green Belt release
1. Housing	Moderate positive	Major positive
2. Equality, diversity and community	Moderate positive	Moderate positive
3. Economic development	Moderate positive	Moderate positive
4. Environmental quality	Moderate positive	Moderate positive
5. Health and well-being	Moderate positive	Moderate positive
6. Infrastructure	Moderate positive	Moderate positive
7. Land use	Moderate positive	Moderate positive
8. Local communities	Moderate positive	Moderate positive
9. Natural landscape	Moderate negative	Moderate negative
10. Recreation and leisure	Moderate positive	Moderate positive
11. Safety and security	Moderate positive	Moderate positive
12. Natural landscape	Moderate negative	Moderate negative
13. Air quality	Moderate positive	Moderate positive
14. Accessibility and transport	Moderate positive	Moderate positive

Table comparing the effects of the Preferred Options Policy with further Green Belt release.

6.7 In summary, the evidence from the Sustainability Appraisal process continues to highlight significant positive effects on housing supply. However, associated negative effects on land, soil, natural landscape and the loss of high-quality agricultural land. There is also recognition that some of the proposed sites within the Green Belt are not easily accessible by all modes of transport and could result in increased car borne trips, which would not present a sustainable development strategy for the city.

7. Call for Sites Evidence

7.1 There were 24 sites located within the Green Belt that were submitted under the Call for Sites exercise, with a capacity for approximately 3,800 dwellings. These are set out in the table below, along with a summary of constraints.

Site	Size (Ha)	Dwelling Capacity	Constraints
Blake Street	1.50	60	LNR/SLINC/Watercourse
Watford Gap Road	68.49	1,500+	SLINC/Road – Motorway/Water Courses/Playing Fields.
Hillwood Road	23.65	500	SLINC/Road – Motorway
Mayhall Drive, Roughley	2.80	100	Road – Motorway
Worcester Lane	1.42	30-60	SLINC
East and West of Weeford Road	6.33	700-760	Road – motorway
Fox Hill	58.87	1,500	Watercourses/SLINC
Tamworth Road	4.15	60	SLINC/Water Courses
Withy Hill	8.62	150-200	



were against. Those unsupportive of this came from the charity and environmental sectors, as well as from the members of the community. In favour, were land consultants and promoters, a property development and investment group, a sports club and a Business Improvement District.



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