



Craig Whittaker MP

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The Green Belt

Thank you for contacting me about protections for the Green Belt.

I am a strong advocate of protections for the Green Belt in particular the hectares within our local authority which checks urban sprawl, preserves the character of historic towns, and safeguards our countryside from encroachment. As such, I was pleased that the recently announced revised National Planning Policy Framework will give further clarification to the existing strong protections for the Green Belt.

While the current Framework stipulates that Green Belt boundaries can be altered by local authorities only in “exceptional circumstances” it fails to define what these exceptional circumstances might be. The new draft of the Framework sets out steps that a local planning authority must take before concluding such exceptional circumstances exist, including the consideration of suitable brownfield sites.

However, I do believe that it is wrong that there is brownfield land within Green Belt boundaries which is often left unused. That is why I welcome that the new Framework will allow brownfield land in the Green Belt to be used for development, provided that this does not impact the openness of the Green Belt. Greater use of brownfield sites will reduce the need for development on greenfield sites, protecting previously undeveloped land outside of the Green Belt and reducing pressure on the undeveloped Green Belt land we value.

I am confident that the revised National Planning Policy Framework will help protect our Green Belt land for years to come, building on the Government’s strong record, with the area of Green Belt designated land in our local authority since 2010.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Kind regards,

Craig Whittaker MP