

# **Green Belt Policy**

Analysis of the results of a consultation by the  
Landscape Institute

August 2016

# Introduction

The housing shortage in parts of the UK is one of the key factors spurring debate about the Green Belt and raising questions about whether it is time for a review of policy governing its use and designation. Opinions are often polarising: some think the Green Belt is a “green noose”; others think it should be protected in perpetuity.

The voice of the landscape profession has been largely absent from the debate. In early 2016, the Landscape Institute (LI) ran a consultation to address this by seeking the views of LI members to ensure that, as the debate around the Green Belt develops, the landscape profession is heard.

This report is an analysis of the results of that consultation. The consultation included a total of 15 questions. Five of these questions provided headline quantitative data, which is presented in analysis (2). Other questions demanded purely text responses.

All of these responses – including those added under ‘further comment’ – have been reviewed as part of a qualitative analysis. This report aims to provide an aggregate picture of the views of those members who responded – outlining both the polarising arguments and the common ground – and is structured around five core themes (2.1). These themes inform the conclusions (3).

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# 1. Executive summary

1. Asked whether or not Landscape Institute members support the current national and local planning policies that seek to ensure that all Green Belt land remains open in perpetuity, there was a fairly even split with 40% in the 'yes' camp, 37% in the 'no' and 23% 'unsure'. But far from representing two distinct ideologies, three quarters of respondents (148 members) provided further comment as a disclaimer on their position. This suggests that the debate is much more nuanced.
2. As the statements from Sajid Javid MP, CPRE, and Martin Wolf quoted in the consultation show, any debate around the Green Belt is too often presented as a question of being either for or against developing on it. In fact, the debate needs to be fine-tuned: it is clear from member contributions that Green Belt differs in character and function from place to place, requiring different planning responses and that, while some areas of the Green Belt may be suitable for built development, others are not.
3. Perhaps the question should be: is current policy on the Green Belt fit for purpose? Certainly, there is a consensus that it is out of step with current thinking on planning, designing and managing land for green infrastructure and ecosystem services. To quote one member: "The debate has become a sterile one. The CPRE have long upheld the view that the Green Belt is important to constrain development; the builders resent it for precisely the same reason and say that, as much of it is of poor environmental quality, it should not all be protected. But there is an alternative view that these areas of countryside between and around our large cities need to be re-designed on a large scale to better serve the urban population. That requires a transformative vision."
4. Most members agree that the Green Belt has served its post-war purpose well, preventing urban sprawl and coalescence. However, to continue to preserve it as it is, may be to preserve an idea of the Green Belt that has become a fiction. Many argue that the public perception of the Green Belt as countryside is at odds with the reality of degraded or over-farmed land with little amenity or ecological value. For example, the policy is often misunderstood as a designation that assigns landscape or amenity value.

5. There needs to be a better understanding that terms such as 'openness' do not, in the context of Green Belt, necessarily mean natural, accessible or a complete absence of development. Furthermore, constraining Green Belt development can have adverse effects on nearby rural settlements that have to soak up demand. Others argue that similar benefits of preventing sprawl have been achieved via other policy mechanisms.
6. There is considerable appetite for a review to assess how big the gap between the fiction and the reality of Green Belt really is, and for this review to inform policy that ensures that Green Belt land is not only preserved but enhanced. Many members believe that the Green Belt needs recalibration for the 21st century. This could include a comprehensive assessment of what is 'good' and 'bad' (i.e well-justified or poorly performing) Green Belt, and potentially a redrawing of Green Belt boundaries to make them more effective but without reducing the total area of Green Belt. However, there is a palpable nervousness that, once planning regulations are relaxed or amended, it could mark the beginning of the end of policy protection for open land around cities.
7. Given the additional pressures on our limited land resource in the UK, whether from housing, food production or public health, a case could be made for a review of policy to ensure that all Green Belt land is better managed to deliver urban resilience in the face of climate change and as a setting for sustainable development. Some members suggested that any policy review should seek to strengthen the aspirations in paragraph 81 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) with a set of robust policies that make public benefit a priority.
8. Other suggestions for what might constitute a review of Green Belt policy include reviewing how much the landscape character of Green Belts has changed since they were designated. The Landscape Institute has a track record of promoting multi-functional landscapes and this could be the starting point for any consideration of the re-enrichment of Green Belt land, allied to the economic case put forward in the UK National Ecological Assessment.
9. What should the LI's position be on the Green Belt? The consultation suggests members are cautious. They are, however, clear that the LI should be the seat of intelligent debate on Green Belt: 88% agreed that LI should promote such a debate about the social, environmental and economic costs and benefits of current Green Belt policy.

10. The consultation responses are less unanimous on whether the LI should publish a definitive policy position statement. Although 67% of people said that it should, 132 of them left further comment qualifying their position. The majority of these comments suggested that the LI should focus its efforts on encouraging professional judgement and assessment of Green Belt land parcels that take landscape and visual matters into account.
11. Staking out a definitive policy position is tricky. As one member put it: "Typically position statements are for or against. Such a position statement potentially means the integrity of a landscape professional's 'professional judgement' could be called into question if he or she were working on a project at odds with the Institute's policy position statement."
12. 94% of members agreed that the LI should promote examples of best practice in terms of planning, design and management of land within the Green Belt. Landscape professionals can bring a balanced professional insight to a very emotive topic. The LI should therefore continue to focus its efforts on advocating an intelligent, unsentimental debate – one whose ultimate aim is to provide some sort of prospectus or vision for the future of the Green Belt.

## 2. Analysis: Headline data

	AGREE %	DISAGREE %	UNSURE %
Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?			
<p>“There’s no need to build on the Green Belt...there’s plenty of land that’s not Green Belt that we can build on that is suitable for housing and we need to get on with it.” – Sajid Javid MP, Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills</p>	44	36	20
<p>“When we lose open Green Belt land, we lose more than just a view, a space to run or play, an easy escape from the city or valuable farmland. We lose land that has its own identity and plays its own role in England’s heritage. Green Belt land is important for our wider environment, providing us with the trees and the undeveloped land which reduce the effect of the heat generated by big cities. Instead of reducing this green space, we should be using it to its best effect.” – CPRE</p>	64	25	11
<p>“It is untrue that the Green Belts are areas of outstanding amenity. They are rather sources of increasing misery, as an ever-large population is crammed into an artificially limited space. This is a really big issue. That is, of course, why no politician dares touch it.” – Martin Wolf CBE, <i>Financial Times</i></p>	52	29	19
Do you support the current national and local planning policies that seek to ensure that all Green Belt land remains open in perpetuity?	40	37	23

	AGREE %	DISAGREE %	UNSURE %
Do you agree that the Landscape Institute should promote a national debate around the social, environmental and economic costs and benefits of current Green Belt policy?	88	3	9
Do you agree that the Landscape Institute should, as part of the debate, promote examples of good practice in terms of the planning, design and management of land within Green Belt?	94	2	4
Do you agree that the Landscape Institute should publish a definitive policy position statement on Green Belt policy?	67	7	26

## 2.1 Analysis: Five core themes

### 1. The Green Belt debate is not as simple as being for or against development

As the statements from Sajid Javid MP, the CPRE and Martin Wolf in the consultation show, any debate around the Green Belt is too often presented as a question of either being for or against developing on them. In fact, the debate is much more nuanced: while there might be some areas of the Green Belt that are suitable for development, there are others that are not.

Perhaps this is compounded by some of the language used around the Green Belt. Whether or not to maintain the Green Belt 'in perpetuity', for example, draws a hard line through the debate. 'In perpetuity' is not applied to any other aspects of planning policy. Not even national parks and AONBs have this strength of wording associated with their conservation and enhancement. Yet the reality is that planning policies need to be able to evolve. The question is how to achieve this without diluting the Green Belt's intrinsic intent and therefore its position in the planning balance.

Some of our members see an urgent need for Green Belt policy to adapt. They argue that what was designated on an arbitrary basis more than 50 years ago does not sit easily with current evidence-based policy making. To quote one member: "The population has risen by 25% at least since the mid-1950s, the pressure on land where people want to live and work is huge, and there is a nasty whiff of nimbyism about the 'sacrosanct' status of Green Belt land."

Another view is that a very well-worded exceptions policy, with clear objectives and sequential tests to be met, would be necessary before anyone would feel comfortable with removing 'in perpetuity'.

Perhaps the middle way is to review Green Belt policy through the lens of landscape function. The Green Belt's purpose was primarily to prevent the coalescence of rapidly growing cities and to avoid the conurbations that are seen in the super cities of the world, such as Tokyo. This is arguably less relevant as a planning designation today, in an age of city-regions and cross-regional 'powerhouses' for growth.

The Landscape Institute has a track record of promoting multi-functional landscapes and this could be the starting point for any consideration of the

re-enrichment of many Green Belts, allied to the economic case put forward in both the UK National Ecological Assessment and the Economic of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB), given their roots in the concept of ecosystem services.

The lines of the debate surrounding the Green Belt need to be reframed. The fact that this issue still commands such strong public support suggests that these are great foundations upon which to build a new vision for what we want it to be.

## 2) The public has a misconception of the Green Belt

For most members of the media and the public, the interpretation of the Green Belt appears to be that it is all open countryside. Not only is this conception wrong, but it hinders meaningful debate – people are often defending an ideal of the Green Belt, rather than the reality. More needs to be done to demonstrate the distinction between countryside and policy-protected Green Belt, and what exactly that is.

There is also a misconception about the extent of the Green Belt. It does not cover all of the green fields outside of built up areas. There are 14 Green Belts within England, which cover around 13% of ‘undeveloped’ land (approximately 1.6 million hectares). Furthermore, the policy is widely misunderstood as a designation that assigns landscape or visual value. There needs to be a wider understanding that terms such as ‘openness’ in the context of Green Belt do not necessarily mean natural, accessible or completely undeveloped.

Clearly, the Green Belt has become part of the UK’s national identity, demonstrative of a country that values its landscapes and has a strong cultural connection with rural areas, even though most people today live in urban environments. As one member put it: “Discussions about the Green Belt are like discussions about the weather – part of the UK’s psyche.” However, any unsentimental conversation that attempts to solve some of the issues currently surrounding the Green Belt needs to be able to decide what is rooted in nostalgia and what is reality.

## 3) Policy should be reviewed to establish new objectives for Green Belt

There is a general consensus that the two biggest benefits of Green Belt have been: 1) containing the expansion and coalescence of cities and 2) providing access to a wide range of environmental benefits for urban populations ‘on the doorstep’.

The Green Belt focuses development, government services and infrastructure. For example, a financial argument for a new tube service stretching for miles into the

Green Belt to low-density housing clusters is less convincing than one for a short extension to a regenerated high-density area in south London. As one member put it: "It has saved thousands of hectares of Surrey, Kent, Herts, Middlesex, Bucks and Essex – much of this beautiful and unspoiled landscape – from being submerged in speculative housing."

But it is not clear that all Green Belt land is equal in terms of fulfilling the aims of the policy, particularly with regards to openness, nor that it has resulted in a consistent level of high-quality landscape. Some members argue that similar benefits of preventing sprawl have been achieved via other policy mechanisms (such as in the case of Southampton and Salisbury) without a "restrictive" Green Belt. Others argue that the environment should be protected based on its merits, not on the basis of a "sweeping policy that covers such large areas in some locations that its validity has been now come into question."

Given the additional pressures on our limited land resource in the UK, whether from housing, food production or public health, a case could be made for a review of policy to ensure that all Green Belt land is managed to deliver urban resilience in the face of climate change and as a setting for sustainable development. Clearly defined objectives for Green Belt could also make it less of a soft target for politicians and developers. The housing crisis is not simply a problem of space – it is caused by a multitude of factors and won't be solved simply by increasing the supply of cheap land to build on.

Visual and environmental assessments of Green Belt locations at the local level could determine where open land could contribute to flood attenuation, recreation, or biodiversity, and where some development could be allowed to deliver direct community benefits. As one member suggested: "Green Belt should not preclude improving our villages, which may mean some acceptance of additional development, located well, well-designed, and of the right social mix."

Suggestions for what might constitute a review of Green Belt policy, included: reviewing how much the landscape character of Green Belts has changed since they were designated; how much development has been allowed and what its impact has been on the landscape and local community; how farming practices have changed the landscape; an assessment of how much the landscape quality of Green Belts, or some parts of Green Belts, has deteriorated since they were designated; what environmental and community benefits Green Belts provide and what they could potentially provide; and the impact of protecting one area on adjacent areas – for example, the effect of the Birmingham-Coventry Green Belt on Warwick and Stratford-upon-Avon.

## 4) Public benefit should be at the heart of Green Belt policy

Too many Green Belts are “mostly farmland”, according to some members, and this is often inaccessible to the populations they aim to serve. Many councils also “lack effective management of Green Belt”, allowing land to go into decline. Some members are of the impression that many landowners compound this problem by seemingly holding onto degraded land or deliberately neglecting it “so that they can cash in on the land value when development is eventually allowed.”

Some members suggest that any review of Green Belt should seek to strengthen the vague aspirations in paragraph 81 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) with a set of robust policies that make public benefit a priority. If Green Belt is to be protected, it could be treated as an amenity resource, making these spaces akin to large publicly-accessible national parks. In some cases this may mean reviewing Green Belt boundaries to determine whether land release for sustainable forms of development might contribute more to public benefit than mere preservation of openness.

## 5) Green Belt policy needs to benefit rural populations too

Defence of existing Green Belt policy is often driven by urban voices. But there is a counter argument frequently presented by rural communities: by not locating development solutions in Green Belt, are we pushing new development outwards onto rural villages and towns, where higher quality landscape is being harmed?

As one members put it: “We all want thriving and sustainable communities, but this has implications for housing and employment land, and where great swathes of land is 'off-limits', this puts an unfair burden on residual areas.” A town surrounded by Green Belt, for example, is more likely to be able to accommodate 400 new houses than a countryside village that would be swamped, its character ruined, by disproportionate development. Yet some argue that this is what is happening. In some local authority areas with designated Green Belt, there is realistically nowhere to build new housing to provide the five-year housing supply required by the NPPF.

A better balance needs to be achieved between the urban fringe and the Green Belt. This could mean greater fluidity between the two to allow for land release on a net-nil-loss basis. In crude terms: any existing Green Belt lost could be replaced by an adjacent ‘finger’ of new Green Belt projecting into the urban fringe.

It is clear from member contributions that Green Belt differs in character and function from place to place, requiring different planning responses. Some

respondents suggest that, where it is proven that housing development needs to take place in the Green Belt, it would be good practice to examine all potential Green Belt development sites to rate their 'value' relative to each other and to non-Green Belt sites. In addition to the usual social and economic assessments of NPPF, for Green Belt purposes, these appraisals need to consider sustainability in terms of potential environmental, visual and landscape impacts. Such assessments could be carried out by landscape professionals.

### 3. Conclusions

What should the Landscape Institute's position be on the Green Belt? The consultation suggests members are cautious. Members are clear that the LI should be the seat of intelligent debate on Green Belt: 88% agreed that it should promote such a debate about the social, environmental and economic costs and benefits of current Green Belt policy.

It is less unanimous on whether the LI should publish a definitive policy position statement. Although 67% of people said that it should, 132 left further comment qualifying their position. The majority of these comments suggested that the LI should focus its efforts on how to provide expert advice on how to work with the Green Belt. The LI should "encourage professional judgement and assessment of Green Belt land parcels that take landscape and visual matters into account."

Staking out a definitive policy position is tricky. As one member put it: "Typically, position statements are for or against. Such a position statement potentially means the integrity of a landscape professional's 'professional judgement' could be called into question if he/she were working on a project at odds with the Institute's policy position statement."

Some members work for developers promoting the release of Green Belt land; others work for organisations dedicated to resisting development. Any position also needs to be careful to take account of the positions and objectives of other organisations, such as those in the housing sector. Where these parties agree is on the need to use tools and professional knowledge – in such fields as ecosystem services, green infrastructure, landscape character and the European Landscape Convention – to positively enhance the existing Green Belt and its adjacent urban and rural spaces.

Most members see Green Belt policy as a blunt tool – a quantitative spatial policy that largely ignores quality and function. Landscape professionals can make a huge contribution to more refined policies of land-use planning that addresses landscape character, quality and green infrastructure in the Green Belt, particularly at the interface between Green Belt and urban areas.

Qualitative assessment is crucial. The landscape profession can assist in identifying the most sensitive, high-quality and valued land, which should be retained as Green Belt and inform a pragmatic approach to the expansion of settlements where required. It is also well qualified to assist in identifying measures to significantly enhance land within the Green Belt, as stated in NPPF Para 81. As one member suggested, this could involve carrying out studies of each parcel of Green Belt land

(as Land Use Consultants have done for the Coventry City Green Belt) and formulating conservation and enhancement policies.

When asked, 94% of those consulted agreed that the LI should promote examples of best practice in terms of planning, design and management of land within the Green Belt. But some sounded a note of caution: politicians must not be allowed to take it as read that, as long as these high-quality principles are applied in policy, all Green Belt is fair game for development.

There is clearly a public and professional appetite for the re-conceptualisation of the Green Belt in terms of green infrastructure, and in terms of the interplay between rural and urban-fringe. We need to reconsider what the primary and secondary functions of the Green Belt should be in the future.

There is an argument that it should fulfil additional green infrastructure functions and that this is where landscape architects can add value. As one member put it: "We can lead the way in the development of a new green infrastructure model for Cities which moves towards a green corridor or green spokes model providing quality green space in and out of the city rather than the Green Belt somewhere on the outskirts."

Above all, landscape professionals can bring a balanced professional perspective to a very emotive topic. It's a perspective that recognises the inherent value of open space and landscapes, as well the need for sustainable development that responds appropriately to place and context, and an understanding of the planning system.

The LI should focus its efforts on advocating an intelligent, unsentimental debate. One whose ultimate aim is to provide some sort of prospectus or vision for the future of the Green Belt.

## 3.1 Conclusions: Key areas for debate

The following are a list of questions that emerged from the consultation about how to take Green Belt policy forward. These questions are not exhaustive but represent the prevailing view of those members that responded. They should be seen as conversation starters about where we go from here.

### 1) How could we build on, not brush away, existing protections?

Green Belt is a planning designation focused on administrative boundaries and designed to prevent sprawl, not intended to protect high-quality landscapes. It could become a national designation with different categories related to functions. For example: Green Belt to prevent sprawl; Green Belt with high-amenity value; Green Belt with high-wildlife value. Alternately, mechanisms could be introduced that would reward landowners that allowed public access or maintained their land for the benefit of people or ecology.

The fundamental aim of Green Belt could be redefined to focus on positive sustainable development planning. As such, the existing aim could be reworded to read: "The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to protect highly-valued and highly-sensitive landscapes around settlements by promoting sustainable patterns of development based on objectively assessed needs."

The review could build on the Green Belt's five functions as defined under the NPPF, in particular, by re-examining the tests of 'openness' and 'very special circumstances'. The meaning of 'openness' is not defined in planning policy and is often confused with open views. The actual meaning, as clarified in case law, is related to the absence of built development rather than visual openness.

### 2) How could we encourage a green-infrastructure-led approach to management of existing Green Belt?

Many members believe that the time is up on the Green Belt 'doughnut' and that wildlife corridors are more important than blanket circles around settlements. The debate could be opened up to include discussion around how a network of green spaces or 'green fingers' throughout the city (which is how, for example, Stockholm and a number of German cities are laid out) may provide more amenity benefits for the wider public than the Green Belt.

Local authorities could be required to produce green infrastructure management plans for Green Belt areas, collaborating with their neighbours and other public bodies as necessary under the Duty to Co-operate, and establishing partnership forums to include other land owning and managing stakeholders and Local Enterprise Partnerships.

Green Belt policy could include measures to prevent building on floodplains. These areas should be properly designated and protected with appropriate improvements to watercourses. Green Belt could be reviewed against watershed maps and flooding patterns to investigate potential for water holding areas.

Solar farms could be developed in conjunction with wildlife enhancement measures. Single, medium-scale wind turbines can be installed without a loss of openness or loss of agricultural productivity. Local farming cooperatives could be set up to work Green Belt farming land. This would be an extension of the allotment / smallholding concept. It would allow underused Green Belt land to be better managed, more productive, as well as providing increased amenity value and facilitating greater urban resident connections into the countryside.

### **3) How could we manage Green Belt landscapes in a collective and collaborative way, learning from good practices such as AONB management boards?**

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) lacks a strong national policy and strategy for landscape management, including monitoring and regular review. Green Belt should be considered at a landscape-scale, which would support work being carried out through The Wildlife Trusts' Living Landscapes project and the RSPB's Futurescapes project. This will ensure a joined-up network throughout the whole of the UK, which will be of greater benefit than the current series of smaller unconnected areas.

### **4) Could we allow Green Belt release for development without reducing the net area of Green Belt?**

Any loss of Green Belt could be compensated on a nil-net-loss basis. This could include some reversion of urban areas to assist creation of green infrastructure and the delivery of Ecosystem Services in accordance with strategic GI plans. In addition, there could be a 'cap' limit on how much commercial / residential development can take place in a given hectare of Green Belt land.

A Green Belt review could also allow for 'swaps'. This would be a system whereby a developer can be allowed to build on a small proportion of carefully reviewed and selected Green Belt site, in return for restoring and managing a specific 'twinned' brownfield area, which becomes designated as Green Belt in perpetuity.

## 5) How could we require development on land released from Green Belt to be an exemplar of sustainability and also provide for enhancement of green infrastructure functions on retained areas of Green Belt?

There could be a national review of current Green Belt, how it's used and if it can or should be amended (added to or reduced) to support other pressures on land use and planning. All Green Belt studies should be informed by an appropriate method of assessment to determine the suitability or non-suitability of any land for release. This could include establishing Green Belt-specific design codes and guidance that would apply across local authority boundaries.

A 'Green Belt levy' could be introduced to capture funds from the capital programme for new build. In this scenario, developers would be allowed to build in return for paying a levy to compensate for the loss of Green Belt land by providing funds to make remaining areas more accessible to the public and better for wildlife.

## 6) How could we provide landowners in Green Belt areas with incentives to deliver public benefits that are relevant to the neighbouring urban areas?

Green Belts could undoubtedly be better used to provide greater benefits to the settlements they surround. Currently, there is no requirement (apart from paragraph 81 of the NPPF that offers guidance but no powers of enforcement) for Green Belt land to be positively managed or enhanced. As such, in cases where land is not identified for development, it should be required to be managed to provide the opportunities set out in paragraph 81 of the NPPF.

## 3.2. Conclusions: Next steps

The Landscape Institute's Policy and Communications Committee (PCC) would like to thank all members who helped contribute to this report by submitting their thoughts during the consultation process.

The next step will be for the PCC to establish an expert group of members to help guide and inform future LI work on Green Belt. It is vital that the voice of the landscape profession is heard as the debate continues, and consideration will be given to the development of a position statement on the subject of Green Belt later in 2016. It is clear that any position will need to be sensitive to the work that members undertake and take account of the fact that members work on both Green Belt release and its protection.

Any member interested in contributing to this work in the future should contact Stephen Russell, Head of Policy, at [stephen.russell@landscapeinstitute.org](mailto:stephen.russell@landscapeinstitute.org)

## 4. Appendix

Below is a list of all the research, reports and project examples of original thinking on Green Belt submitted by members during the consultation.

### Reports

1. Video about the Green Belt by Tom Turner and Robert Holden:  
<https://youtu.be/fOc2ytV7zO4>
2. Dr John Sturzaker at the University of Liverpool is currently writing a book on the changing nature of Green Belts in the UK:  
<https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/environmental-sciences/staff/john-sturzaker>
3. High Peak Borough Council: High Peak Local Plan and Landscape Impact Assessment, January 2014 (report prepared by Wardell Armstrong)
4. Rural Urban Fringe Vision:  
<https://www.bartlett.ucl.ac.uk/planning/research/urban-regeneration/ng-vision-for-a-sustainable-fringe>
5. Peri-urban Futures: Scenarios and models for land use change in Europe (Springer): <http://www.springer.com/us/book/9783642305283>
6. Outputs of the EU FP6 PLUREL project:  
<http://www.purple-eu.org/eu-funded-projects>
7. Farming at the Rural-Urban Fringe, Birmingham City University:  
[www.bcu.ac.uk/Download/.../cdfdfa4f-0c61-422e-a424-3c1ebbb3937d](http://www.bcu.ac.uk/Download/.../cdfdfa4f-0c61-422e-a424-3c1ebbb3937d)

### Projects

1. Barton Willmore's Wolfson Economics Prize 2014 submission Garden City vision, Be a Pioneer: <http://www.bartonwillmore.co.uk/be-a-pioneer>
2. Urbed's 2014 proposal for the Uxcester Garden City (contact David Rudlin) shows a strategic approach to house building, while replacing every one hectare of development with one hectare of multi-functional green infrastructure.
3. Cardowan Colliery, Lanarkshire (Glasgow Greenbelt) & Udston Mine project – both now residential zones with extensive areas of rich open-space that is accessible to the public.
4. Stanford-Le-Hope Barratt Homes.

5. The National Forest and Mersey Forest – not Green Belt land per se but examples of land management initiatives that have achieved significant improvements in urban fringes.
6. The National Trust's Stamford Brook with Redrow Homes. This 700-house development is an example of a highly-sustainable development on land that was previously open arable land adjacent to Green Belt.
7. Green Belt within North Tyneside. Enhancement through granting of planning permission to enable derelict land to be developed.
8. Greater Manchester, Mersey Basin. Flood zones in the south of Manchester, with pockets of development throughout leading to an urbanised city centre.
9. Chaulington, Caddington, Central Bedfordshire. General Motors site on the edge of the Chilterns AONB granted planning permission for residential development, providing the opportunity to enhance landscape and habitat links and enhance existing woodland to County status.
10. Cane Hill, Coulsdon by HTA Design (contact James Lord).
11. Hackbridge Primary School, Sutton by Churchman Landscape Architects with Architype and Elementa. Planning achieved in December 2015. This is a Passivhaus Plus building that generates its own energy through ground-source heat pumps and PVs. Includes a bio-solar roof that combines planting to offset the loss of grassland and PVs. Studies have been undertaken relating to Green Belt reviews around North Harlow with East Herts to enable residential developments in the most acceptable locations.
12. MHP Design landscape led masterplanning process for 1,500 new homes in the Green Belt between Gloucester and Cheltenham at Brockworth. Supported by local authority, approved by planning committee but called in by Secretary of State and subject to an inquiry, outcome pending.
13. Tidbury Green, Solihull, for Lioncourt Homes (landscape by Waterman).
14. All London Green Grid.
15. Metropolitan open land and Green Belt in London, London's Parks, Royal Parks, Lea Valley Park (statutory) and Colne Valley Park (non-statutory land management and planning initiative).
16. St Andrews Green Belt appraisal by Alison Grant and David Tyldesley Associates.
17. LUC's Edinburgh Green Belt appraisal.
18. West Edinburgh Landscape Strategy by 7N and Horner Maclennan.
19. Hertfordshire County Council's ownership of Green Belt Estates, coupled with the Rural Environmental Management Plans is believed to have supported better management of Green Belt land.
20. Birmingham City Council's 2031 Development Plan. Landscape character assessment and sensitivity analysis available for Green Belt land.
21. Bath and North East Somerset. Emerging policy to protect the setting of settlements identifying those areas that make a significant contribution to the settlement. Although this may only be one facet of Green Belt, it is a start in planning for positive change in accordance with European Landscape Convention thinking.

22. Helsinki's policy of positive management or the Swiss system of zoning land within Green Belt for specific uses.
23. Room for the River and the coastal developments and coastal defences in the Netherlands are superb examples of thinking at a landscape scale.
24. Green Road Works, Netherlands, Stronghold Grebbeberg and Thalie Park.

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