



**Tamworth Borough Council  
– Green Belt Review  
Addendum - January 2015**

## Contents

<b>Section 1: West Midlands Green Belt</b>	<b>3</b>
Tamworth Green Belt in context	3
History of the West Midlands Green Belt	3
<b>Section 2: Strategic Role of West Midlands Green Belt</b>	<b>4</b>
Strategic Role of Tamworth's Green Belt	4
Strategic Role of West Midlands Green Belt in other local authorities	4
Strategic Role of North Warwickshire's Green Belt	4
Strategic Role of Lichfield's Green Belt	5
Strategic Role of Birmingham's Green Belt	5
Conclusion	5

## **Section 1: West Midlands Green Belt**

### ***Tamworth Green Belt in context***

- 1.1 It is important to put Tamworth's Green Belt in the context of the wider West Midlands. The West Midlands Green Belt is set out in Section 3 of the Green Belt Review 2014, but is included below in this addendum for clarity and ease of reference.
- 1.2 The main Green Belt Review document does not set out changes occurring to the West Midlands Green Belt in other administrative areas. This addendum gives a strategic overview of the current situation in the West Midlands – paying particular attention to areas close to Tamworth. This will add further detail to the assessments carried out in the Green Belt review.

### **History of the West Midlands Green Belt**

- 1.3 It is important to outline the history of Green Belt policy within the West Midlands and in particular within Tamworth.
- 1.4 A Green Belt was first proposed in the West Midlands during the 1950's, principally as a means of preventing, through planning policy, the continuing outward expansion of the built up area of the West Midlands towns and cities into open countryside and in particular towards the series of freestanding towns and villages surrounding the main West Midlands conurbation. Within the Green Belt new built development would be severely restricted, largely to those needed in association with rural uses. In addition, the scale of buildings permitted as appropriate to those uses, would be minimised.
- 1.5 Draft Green Belt boundaries were initially identified in the 1960's and particularly relevant to Tamworth, they included a Green Belt of some 5 to 6 miles in width between the edges of Birmingham/Sutton Coldfield and the towns of Rugeley, Lichfield, Tamworth and Nuneaton. These towns lay at the outer edge of the Green Belt. This meant that most of the Green Belt area between Birmingham and Tamworth lay within the largely rural local authorities of North Warwickshire Borough and Lichfield District, as shown on Figure 1. This illustrates the current extent of the Green Belt and shows that the Green Belt south of Tamworth lies within North Warwickshire and to the west of Dosthill it lies within Lichfield District. Tamworth Borough, with very little rural land to the west and south of the built up area, therefore has a relatively small proportion the 'sub- regional' Green Belt area within its own boundaries.
- 1.6 The proposal to establish the Green Belt and to define its detailed boundaries took many years to be formally approved through the preparation of Local Plans. Within Staffordshire this was a gradual process. This included publication of draft proposals within the Staffordshire County Development Plan in the 1960's and early 1970's, and then included an amendment to the Staffordshire Development Plan in 1975 that defined a boundary within Tamworth. The Secretary of State approved proposals for the West Midlands Green Belt in 1975, which included the boundaries defined within the County Development Plan amendment. The approved Green Belt included the open countryside areas of Dosthill, Wilnecote and Hockley, but the boundary took account of proposals to develop the area south of Hedging Lane and to the east of Dosthill High Street, principally for housing. Whilst the then Reliant

works was excluded from the Green Belt, the area surrounding Dosthill Hall was included within Green Belt.

## **Section 2: Strategic Role of West Midlands Green Belt**

### ***Strategic Role of Tamworth's Green Belt***

- 2.1 The Green Belt Review considers the strategic role of Tamworth's Green Belt; this addendum adds further information to support the conclusions of the review. It examines how the Tamworth portion contributes to the function of West Midlands Green Belt.
- 2.2 In the local context this part of the Green Belt was established to have a principal function of preventing the outward 'sprawl' of Birmingham from encroaching towards Tamworth, but it can also be seen that extensions to the southern part of Tamworth could potentially contribute to the narrowing of the open gap between Birmingham and Tamworth. Although this is some considerable distance and unlikely to happen in the short to medium term that Tamworth would eventually merge into the eastern edge of Birmingham at Sutton Coldfield, there are other settlements to consider that are set within the Green Belt and 'intervene' in the open countryside between the two larger urban areas.
- 2.3 South of Tamworth there is the large village of Kingsbury, to the west Fazeley is in parts physically joined to Tamworth and there are also the smaller villages of Wood End, Piccadilly and Drayton Bassett.
- 2.4 Kingsbury, Wood End and Piccadilly within North Warwickshire all lie around 2 kilometres from the edge of Tamworth, whilst Drayton Bassett in Lichfield lies only around 1 kilometre from the edge of Fazeley. The incremental growth of all of these settlements over a long period, could potentially have a significant impact upon the character of the area as a whole, including the perceived extent of open countryside between settlements when travelling within or through the area, views from public places, and the prospect that the outer edges of one settlement could be seen from another, where at present they are hidden from each other.
- 2.5 The prevention of this long-term change to the character of the countryside in the area is the fundamental purpose of the Green Belt and it relates to 'sprawl', 'merging' and 'encroaching into the countryside'. It is considered that even though the area of Green Belt within Tamworth is only a small part of the whole, it is nevertheless playing an important role in preventing such an incremental change that, if unchecked, could have a significant impact on the character of the wider area.

### ***Strategic Role of West Midlands Green Belt in other local authorities***

#### **Strategic Role of North Warwickshire's Green Belt**

- 2.6 North Warwickshire's Core Strategy Local Plan was adopted in October 2014. The Core Strategy does not amend the Green Belt boundary, however it does allow the future Site Allocations Local Plan to make boundary changes where required. The most recent consultation document of their Sites Local Plan does not remove any land from the Green Belt.

2.7 Local authorities in Warwickshire and Coventry are currently carrying out a Green Belt Review. However North Warwickshire is currently only involved with preparing and agreeing a methodology for the review but not implementing the review within their area.

2.8 At present North Warwickshire's development plan does not alter the strategic nature of the West Midlands Green Belt in their administrative area.

### **Strategic Role of Lichfield's Green Belt**

2.9 Lichfield's Local Plan: Stage 1 is currently under examination and an Inspector's report is due late December 2014. Through the examination process their Local Plan has been modified and Green Belt release is now proposed around Lichfield City. The Local Plan does not propose to release Green Belt sites around Tamworth or Fazeley, or around the villages in-between Tamworth and Birmingham City Council's administrative boundary.

### **Strategic Role of Birmingham's Green Belt**

2.10 Birmingham's Local Plan is currently under examination and an interim note from the Inspector has been published. Their Local Plan proposes to remove significant sections of the Green Belt around Sutton Coldfield, which lies to the south west of Tamworth. This is in two main areas at the Langley SUE to delivery 6,000 new homes and at Peddimore to deliver 80ha of new employment land. As the examination has not concluded, it may be that further Green Belt is released to meet employment or housing needs.

2.11 Birmingham are committed to progress with the Local Plan examination and if found sound the proposed Green Belt release will be adopted by their Council. This Green Belt release will impact upon the second purpose of the Green Belt set out in the NPPF – to prevent nearby towns merging into one another.

### **Conclusion**

2.12 An overall conclusion of the assessment of the Green Belt within Tamworth in relation to the strategic purpose of the Green Belt, is that whilst in area terms it is a relatively small part of the West Midlands Green Belt, it continues to make a significant contribution, particularly in relation to limiting sprawl, merging and encroachment into the countryside.

2.13 It is important to take into consideration that Birmingham's portion of the West Midlands Green Belt is receding and therefore the Green Belt between Tamworth and Birmingham has narrowed. Whilst this gap has narrowed there are currently no proposals for Green Belt removal in North Warwickshire or Lichfield within this area.