

CHAPTER 9 - GREEN BELT

GB1: SAFEGUARDED LAND

The Objections

0571/21	Laing Homes Ltd
0579/3	Michael Lambert
1200/13	English Nature
1578/6	M J Jeanes (Group) Ltd
1935/9	Councillor Anthea Hardy

Summary of Objections

- (a) A reassessment of the former ASRs should have been made to see whether retention of their present extent continues to be warranted.
- (b) The retention of expansion land in the former ASRs is questioned as there is clearly a need to release this land for housing.
- (c) Paragraph 9.08 is inconsistent with national policy guidance on AONBs.
- (d) There is insufficient information with regard to the impact on nature conservation interests in the areas of Safeguarded Land.
- (e) The Handy Cross 'clover leaf', Grange Farm, Gomm Valley, Lane End Road, and Abbey Barn should revert to Green Belt and AONB, and land to the south of Booker Airpark should be taken out.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.1.1 The former Areas of Special Restraint (ASRs) were re-assessed as part of the general process of reviewing the Plan with particular regard to housing needs. All the sites are discussed extensively in section 3.2 of my report. In general, green belt and AONB designations are drawn tightly around the major towns in the district, with the exception of the west side of Princes Risborough. In these circumstances I consider the retention of areas suitable for urban extensions to meet future needs accords with the advice in paragraph 2.12 of PPG2. The remaining areas would accommodate extensive development over many years.

9.1.2 I deal with the question of housing need in Chapter 3 of my report, where I concluded that the shortfall of available land to meet Structure Plan requirements should be addressed. I recommend a housing allocation on one of the ASLs at Terriers Farm to achieve this aim. However, to release the other areas would result in a very substantial over-provision of housing sites in conflict with Policy H2 of the Structure Plan and the guidance in RPG9.

9.1.3 As I have said in my discussion of objections concerning Grange Farm and Lane End Road, I consider there is some inconsistency between the designation of land as an AONB and its safeguarding for future development needs. At the inquiry there was some dispute as to whether a need to meet Structure Plan housing requirements could ever equate to a national need. In the current circumstances, where ASLs outside the AONB are available for development, I agreed with the Council that the test of national need in paragraph 4.5 of PPG7 would not be met at present. I have suggested that the issue of potential long-term development in the AONB to meet sub-regional housing needs should be addressed at the next review of strategic policy.

9.1.4 I have some sympathy with the objector's concerns with the lack of detailed information about nature conservation in the ASLs. Detailed scrutiny of this issue during the inquiry sessions dealing with objections to Abbey Barn North (ABN) lead to in the first instance to a reduction in suggested housing capacity by the Council and was a major factor in my recommendation to delete the site as a housing area. The inquiry sessions into proposed development at other ASLs all revealed the need for more detailed information to assess the effects of development on wildlife than the surveys contained in Gillespies Comparative Landscape Assessment (CD/I/12). However, even in the case of Gomm Valley, which contains an SSSI and a proposed SINC, development may be constrained but not prevented by such designations. The development principles for allocated sites take into account the need for wildlife protection and direct potential developers towards ecologically sound proposals. The provision of more information about these matters is a concern for the future review of the Plan but there is no need for further modifications to this Plan.

9.1.5 I have dealt with Cllr Hardy's proposal for a major satellite settlement and employment area in the green belt on the south west side of High Wycombe in section 3.2. As already mentioned, it is beyond the scope of this Plan to make major alterations to green belt boundaries unless they have been approved in the Structure Plan. While I share many of the objector's views about the value of the Gomm Valley landscape in particular, I have no jurisdiction over changes to AONB boundaries.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- GB/1/1 No modification

GB1: SAFEGUARDED LAND - ABBEY BARN SOUTH
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PIC 9/1 Objections

0524/33	Thames Valley Chamber
0526/42	Chepping Wycombe Parish Council
0974/13	Chiltern Society
1579/31	Oxford Land Ltd
1739/5	Lord Carrington's Grandchildren's Settlement
1798/25	<i>Buckinghamshire County Council – Environmental Services Department</i>
22063/11	Wycombe Summit Ltd/Wycombe Option Ltd

Summary of Objections

- (a) Objection to the reinstatement of Abbey Barn South as Safeguarded Land.
- (b) Infrastructure in the Wycombe Marsh and Abbey Barn North sites must have enough capacity to allow for the future development of Abbey Barn South.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.1.6 I have dealt with objections to the deletion of the mixed use allocation at the site from the Deposit Plan in sections 3.2 and 4.2 of my report. This part of the report deals with the objection to the re-instatement of the ASL designation on the grounds that it should be green belt, as advocated by the Chiltern Society.

9.1.7 The purpose of the ASLs is to ensure that long-term maintenance of green belt boundaries by providing land between the urban edge and the green belt to meet future

development needs. The recent review of RPG9, setting out the level of additional housing provision for Buckinghamshire at an average rate of 3,210 dwellings each year, gives an indication that there will undoubtedly be a longer term need for housing land in the District. While much of the need should be met on previously developed land within the urban area, the Council is already above the government's suggested minimum target. I agree with the Council that requirements for employment land are less certain, but cannot be discounted.

9.1.8 In considering objections to the deletion of the site as an allocation for mixed use I took into account the Council's comparative site assessment and a variety of evidence from Oxford land and other objectors about its suitability for development. I acknowledged that the site suffered from disadvantages such as a poor relationship to public transport the need for substantial investment in highway improvements and loss of best and most versatile agricultural land in particular.

9.1.9 However, I consider that these constraints need not preclude development in the long term. Public transport services to the site could be improved and the cost of highway works would not undermine the fundamental viability of development. The loss of agricultural land is one factor to be weighed in the balance with others, and affects the suitability of other sites, albeit to a lesser extent. I have concluded therefore that there are no real impediments to the development of the site, which accords with the criteria for suitability as safeguarded land as set out in Annex B of PPG2.

9.1.10 I note that the County Council's objection has been conditionally withdrawn following PIC 3/6, which ensures that development at Wycombe Marsh would cater for highway improvements necessary to provide satisfactory access to this site. A similar point with regard to ABN does not apply at this stage, following my recommendation to delete the housing allocation in this Plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- GB/1/2 Modify the Plan in accordance with PICs 4/2 and 9/1

GB1: SAFEGUARDED LAND - ABBEY BARN NORTH
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PIC 9/1 Objections

0376/78 Axa Equity and Law Life Assurance Society

Summary of Objections

(a) Abbey Barn North should be included as Safeguarded Land and Gomm Valley deleted.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.1.11 For the reasons set out in section 3.2.1 of the report, I have recommended in favour of this objection with regard to Abbey Barn North (ABN). The ABN site fared less well than Terriers Farm in my own comparative assessment of the suitability of competing sites for primarily residential development. However, I consider the ecological constraints and the need for highway infrastructure in association with Abbey Barn South (ABS) is not so severe as to preclude development completely. In view of the severe constraints on some other ASLs, I consider the site should be safeguarded for future use beyond the plan period, if required.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- GB/1/3 Modify the plan by deleting the housing allocation and re-instating the site as Land Safeguarded from the Green Belt

GB1: SAFEGUARDED LAND - ASHWELLS AND PIMMS CLOSE
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PIC 9/1 Objections

0526/41	Chepping Wycombe Parish Council
0585/4	Ronald T Findlay
0804/2	Mr & Mrs Bailey
0974/12	Chiltern Society
1170/7	Mrs James Bazell
1207/15	Residents' Action Group on Gomm Valley
1437/6	Mr D Harris
1813/7	Mrs Jean Rollason
1862/7	Beaconsfield Constituency – Conservative Association, Tylers Green Branch

Summary of Objections

- (a) Objection to the inclusion of the Ashwells and Pimms Close sites within the Gomm Valley Safeguarded Land.
- (b) The Gomm Valley, including Ashwells and Pimms Close, should become part of the Green Belt.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.1.12 I have dealt with objections to the Deposit Plan housing allocations primarily in section 3.2.1 of my report. The sites are also part of the larger Gomm Valley site proposed for major mixed-use development by Axa, which is covered in section 3.2.4. This part of the report deals with the objection to the retention of the ASL designation on the grounds that it should be green belt.

9.1.13 The purpose of the ASLs is to ensure that long-term maintenance of green belt boundaries by providing land between the urban edge and the green belt to meet future development needs. The recent review of RPG9, setting out the level of additional housing provision for Buckinghamshire at an average rate of 3,210 dwellings each year, gives an indication that there will undoubtedly be a longer term need for housing land in the District. While much of the need should be met on previously developed land within the urban area, the Council is already above the government's suggested minimum target. I agree with the Council that requirements for employment land are less certain, but cannot be discounted.

9.1.14 In considering objections to proposing the allocation for mixed use in the Gomm Valley I took into account the Council's comparative site assessment and a variety of evidence from Axa, Wimpey and other objectors about its suitability for development. I acknowledged that the site suffered from disadvantages such as a poor relationship to public transport the need for substantial investment in highway improvements and loss of best and most versatile agricultural land in particular.

9.1.15 However, I consider that these constraints need not preclude development in the long term. Public transport services to the site could be improved and the cost of highway works would not undermine the fundamental viability of development. The loss of agricultural land is

one factor to be weighed in the balance with others, and affects the suitability of other sites, albeit to a lesser extent. I have concluded therefore that there are no real impediments to the long-term development of the site, which accords with the criteria for suitability as safeguarded land as set out in Annex B of PPG2.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- GB/1/4 Modify the plan in accordance with PIC 3/4

GB1: SAFEGUARDED LAND - GREEN FARM, HIGH WYCOMBE
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The Objections

1578/5 M J Jeanes (Group) Ltd

Summary of Objections

(a) 50 acres of land at Green Farm should be identified as Safeguarded Land.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.1.16 The site is an irregularly shaped parcel of land located on the northern edge of High Wycombe to the rear of houses fronting White Hill and Green Hill, within the AONB as well as the green belt. For the reasons I have stated at section 3.2.5, of this report, I consider that the site should be retained within the green belt as it serves important green belt functions. I recognise that, for the reasons set out in section 7.20, there is no necessity to safeguard the route of the Hazlemere diversion. These included the low ranking of the Grange Farm site that the road would serve in my comparative housing sites assessment possible and strong protection against development afforded by its location in the AONB and green belt. There has not been a recommendation in the Structure Plan to alter the green belt boundaries in this location and I consider that no exceptional circumstances, such as the national need for development, exist to justify the removal of the site from the green belt.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- GB/1/5 No modification

GB1: SAFEGUARDED LAND - LAND TO THE EAST OF ABBEY BARN LANE AND NORTH OF M40
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The Objections

2063/1 Wycombe Summit Ltd/Wycombe Option Ltd

Summary of Objections

(a) This land should be removed from the Green Belt.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.1.17 The objectors seek the removal of the site from the green belt, in order that the site could be developed as a hotel. Section 12.6 deals with the hotel proposal, where I recommend that the Plan makes adequate provision for new hotel development on sites outside the green belt. As repeated elsewhere in the report, government policy in PPG2 is that green belt boundaries should be changed only in response to Structure Plan alterations or otherwise in exceptional circumstances, which do not apply here for the reasons in sub section 12.6.5.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- GB/1/6 No modification

GB1: SAFEGUARDED LAND - TRALEE FARM, SOUTH OF HOLMER GREEN
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The Objections

0709/2 Bryant Homes Technical Services Ltd

Summary of Objections

(a) Site should be removed from the Green Belt and designated as Safeguarded Land.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.1.18 The objection site comprises about 7.1 ha of land adjoining the north-eastern boundary of Hazlemere as shown on the Plan, within the green belt. In general terms new housing in the green belt conflicts with government policy in PPG2 and in PPG3. My comments in the housing chapter about the need for more housing on 'greenfield' land equally to this site. While I identified a shortfall of allocated land to meet Structure Plan requirements to 2011, I consider that this could be met for the most part by the allocation of a major site for 400 dwellings at Terriers Farm, High Wycombe. Therefore I find no need to identify any additional land outside the main urban areas. Even if there were, Policy H2 of the Structure Plan states that land releases should take place outside the green belt. The Plan safeguards other areas excluded from the green belt for possible development in the longer term.

9.1.19 Green belt sites may only be considered for housing as an exception, where they may prove more sustainable than other options. This site lies within Accessibility Zone 5 and that argument does not apply with any real force. A key facet of the green belt is its permanence; PPG2 states that its boundaries should not be changed unless alterations to the Structure Plan have been approved or other exceptional circumstances exist. In this case the site continues to meet green belt functions of: preventing the spread of High Wycombe and its encroachment into the countryside; providing a break in the vulnerable gap between Hazlemere and Holmer Green; and encouraging the development of urban land. The removal of green belt designation would conflict with established policies to protect the green belt. I have found no reason to take a different view from the previous Local Plan Inspector who recommended no change to green belt boundaries here, and no other exceptional circumstances to justify the release of the site from the green belt.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- GB/1/7 No modification

GB1: SAFEGUARDED LAND - JACKSON'S FIELD, CORES END (AS48)

The Objections

1020/2 Reit Asset Management

Summary of Objections

(a) Site should be removed from the Green Belt and designated as Safeguarded Land.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.1.20 I have dealt in detail with a related objection that the site should be developed for housing in section 3.2.6 above. For the reasons set out there, I consider that the site should be retained in the green belt. To allocate the site as safeguarded land would fundamentally undermine the permanence of the green belt, one of its most important characteristics. I found that the site was not more suitable as a development site than Slate Meadow. In the absence of any approved Structure Plan boundary changes, exceptional reasons to justify removing the site from the green belt are required. I found none.

RECOMMENDATIONS

□ GB/1/8 No modification

GB1: SAFEGUARDED LAND - TOWN FIELD, CORES END

The Objections

0348/1 Dawn Holdings SA

Summary of Objections

(a) Site should be designated as Safeguarded Land.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.1.21 The site is a rectangular field of 3.4 ha located on the valley floor of the River Wye between the former Wycombe to Marlow railway line and Town Lane. The site has been included in the green belt since 1972. PPG2 states that green belt boundaries should not be changed unless alterations to the Structure Plan have been approved or other exceptional circumstances exist. Development of this site would destroy its open character and its long term green belt role. In this case the site fulfils the important green belt functions of checking the unrestricted sprawl of the High Wycombe urban area safeguarding the countryside from encroachment, preventing the merger of Cores End with Wooburn and helping urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of urban land.

9.1.22 At present other areas of land remain safeguarded from the green belt to meet future development requirements. There is no need to add to this resource during the life of this Plan and no justification of the suitability of this site for that purpose has been advanced. There has not been a recommendation in the Structure Plan to alter the green belt boundaries in this location and I consider that no exceptional circumstances, such as the national need for development, exist to justify the removal of the site from the green belt.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- GB/1/9 No modification

GB1: SAFEGUARDED LAND - LAND ADJACENT HILL FARM, MARLOW BOTTOM

The Objections

0937/1 Miss P M Kimber

Summary of Objections

(a) Site should be designated as Safeguarded Land.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.1.23 I dealt in detail with a related objection that the site should be developed for housing in section 3.2.6 above. For the reasons set out there, I consider that the site should be retained in the green belt. Other areas of safeguarded land outside the green belt are available to meet possible future housing needs. To allocate the site as an ASL or for housing would fundamentally undermine the permanent boundaries of the green belt, one of its most important characteristics. In the absence of any approved Structure Plan boundary changes there were no exceptional reasons to remove the site from the green belt.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- GB/1/10 No modification

GB1: SAFEGUARDED LAND - WYCOMBE ROAD, PRINCES RISBOROUGH

The Objections

0808/2 Linden Homes South East Ltd

Summary of Objections

(b) Site should be removed from the Green Belt and designated as Safeguarded Land.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.1.24 I have dealt with a related objection that the site should be allocated for housing in section 3.2.5. For the reasons stated there, I consider that the strength and doubtful applicability of the sustainability arguments advanced by the objector were insufficient to outweigh the harmful effects of releasing permanent green belt land. In the absence of approved boundary alterations made by the Structure Plan or any exceptional circumstances the site should remain in the green belt.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- GB/1/10 No modification

GB1: SAFEGUARDED LAND - LAND EAST OF THE LANE, STOKENCHURCH

The Objections

1006/2 Mr D J Giles

Summary of Objections

(a) Area A of AS83 should be designated as Safeguarded Land.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.1.25 The site comprises two parcels of land both adjoining the north-eastern side of Stokenchurch: one mainly open area of about 13.77 ha and a smaller parcel of about 0.9ha on which is sited a former grain drier and attached open barn. The objector argues that the land was wrongly defined as green belt in the Wycombe Rural Areas Local Plan (WRALP) which dates back to 1991. However, whatever happened in the past, the site has been within the green belt for many years without challenge, including at the last Local Plan inquiry.

9.1.26 Government policy in PPG2 emphasises the importance of maintaining permanent green belt boundaries, which should only be altered in the event of approved changes to the Structure Plan or other exceptional circumstances. The objector argued that some land was needed to meet long term local needs in Stokenchurch. I have no firm evidence that these needs could not be met within the existing settlement boundary or on land outside the green belt. To provide for a major expansion of the village on a site of this size would conflict with the broad thrust of Structure Plan Policy H2 and this Plan to direct major growth to the High Wycombe urban area, where a wider range of employment opportunities and commercial and community facilities are available. A range of sites on safeguarded land outside the green belt remain available to meet this purpose. The Structure Plan has not made any changes to the green belt boundary and I consider the local needs advanced by the objector are far short of the exceptional circumstances required to justify releasing a substantial tract of land from the green belt.

9.1.27 The gently sloping grass pasture of the larger parcel of land is an integral element of the broad sweep of Chilterns landscape to the north of Stokenchurch. The site performs the important green belt functions of preventing the outward spread of the village, safeguarding the countryside from encroachment and helping urban regeneration. The boundary of the green belt along the rear gardens of houses on this side of Stokenchurch is quite clearly defined on the ground and needs no clarification.

9.1.28 With regard to the smaller parcel of land which includes the grain drier, paragraph 2.6 of PPG2 states that green belt land should not be developed just because it has become derelict. The objector argues that the site presents a strongly developed presence and should be designated as land falling within the settlement boundary of Stokenchurch. However, although the rather ramshackle building stands on higher ground when viewed from The Lane, the extent of building footprint on this part of the site is low. The adjoining barn/shelter is open on two sides and the site as a whole maintains a rustic appearance, with a character and density of development quite distinct from the adjoining housing estate to the south. I do not therefore consider that the state of the buildings or the appearance of the site represent the exceptional circumstances required to remove the site from the green belt.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- GB/1/11 No modification

GB1i: SAFEGUARDED LAND - GRANGE FARM

The Objections

See Appendix 9A

Summary of Objections

- (a) Add to local road congestion, noise and airborne pollution.
- (b) Destruction of an area of versatile farmland.
- (c) Loss of area of informal amenity and recreation.
- (d) Destruction of a valuable natural environment in the AONB.
- (e) Filling of a strategic gap.
- (f) Reduction of quality of living environment in the vicinity.
- (g) Conflict with the following policies and advice;
 - Government policy, advice and reports
 - European Environmental Directives
 - Agenda 21
 - SERPLAN's Draft Development Strategy for the South East to 2016
 - Countryside Commission's 1991 statement on AONBs
 - Environmental Guidelines for the Management of Roads in the Chilterns AONB
 - Draft Design Guidelines for Development within the Chilterns AONB
 - Buckinghamshire County Structure Plan
 - Wycombe District Council strategic aims
 - other policies within the Local Plan
 - sequential development
 - sustainable development
- (h) Cause unacceptable demands on the local water supply infrastructure.
- (i) Local services and facilities are not adequate to support additional population.
- (j) Affect the value of properties in the immediate surrounding area.
- (k) Increase in crime.
- (l) Brownfield land should be used instead.
- (m) Development should be distributed over a much wider area and not built as one massive development.
- (n) The site should be used for recreation – a 'Millennium' woodland could be planted on the site instead of proposed development.
- (o) Setting an undesirable precedent.
- (p) No sustainable evidence demonstrating a need for development of the site.
- (q) The site is not genuinely capable of development.

- (r) Overwhelming public opposition to the proposal.
- (s) Safeguarded Land designation should be deleted. The site should become subject to the restraints imposed on the remainder of the AONB, or replaced with Local Landscape Area, Conservation Area, Strategic Gap or Green Belt designation.
- (t) Visually intrusive from the AONB, including despoliation of views from the Hughenden Estate, which is designated as a Park of Special Historic Interest.
- (u) Development would threaten the Four Ashes Conservation Area and Listed Buildings at Grange Farm.
- (v) This countryside site has already been spoilt by the unsympathetic way in which it has been farmed and managed. Development should therefore not be delayed and the site should be allocated for immediate development. Grange Road (North) by the Royal Standard and the tennis courts could bear some of the burden of future housing demands.
- (w) There are serious problems with sites identified under Policy H2 and there are limited other sites within the Safeguarded Areas to meet the scale of housing development required. Therefore consideration should be given to release of Grange Farm during the plan period.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.1.29 I have dealt in detail with objections proposing residential development on all or part of this 109 ha site in section 3.2.4 of my report. In doing so I took account of these objections taking the contrary point of view that safeguarded land designation should be deleted and the site included in the green belt. I see no need to re-iterate all those detailed arguments in support of my recommendation against housing allocation(s) in this part of the report. However, I address the issue of whether the green belt boundary should encompass the site.

9.1.30 The prime purpose of the areas of safeguarded land (ASLs), formerly known as ASRs, is to ensure the long term protection of the green belt by providing land for future development needs. As I have already noted in relation to the Abbey Barn South site discussed above, there is very little doubt that the High Wycombe area will continue to experience a need for development land beyond the Plan period at some stage. Annex B of PPG2 sets out the criteria to be applied in selecting ASLs, which should be genuinely capable of development when needed. The factors to be taken into account, bearing in mind government policy in PPGs 3 and 13, include the relationship of the land to existing development, public transport links and other infrastructure, environmental and landscape quality, potential to improve urban edges and advice about protecting the best agricultural land.

9.1.31 In this case a key issue is the location of the whole site within the AONB, a higher order landscape designation than the Council's LLAs. Notwithstanding the comments of the Inspector who heard objections to the last Local Plan, I consider there is some inconsistency between this designation and government policy for the AONB, as clarified by Ministerial statement in June 2000. Development of the site would undoubtedly constitute 'major development' in the terms of paragraph 4.5 of PPG7, and the threefold test would apply. The Council acknowledged that the first two tests relating to national need for the development and availability of alternative sites would not be met in the life of this Plan. If at some future date they were met, it was argued that the environmental quality of the eastern part of the site was such that this area had the potential to accommodate development, and the third test could be met. There are differences in landscape character within the site; a more open pattern of large arable fields in the east contrasts with a more enclosed pastoral area on the western side. However, I draw no particular distinction between these areas in terms of landscape quality, as the Countryside Commission did not on AONB designation.

9.1.32 A fundamental issue here is whether the expansion of High Wycombe, for example with new housing in order to meet sub-regional requirements, could be considered to satisfy the test of a national need that could not be met elsewhere. The relative weight to the protection of the

green belt and the AONB would also need to be addressed, taking account of the guidance in paragraph 68 of PPG3. I note that both PPG7 with regard to AONB revisions and PPG3 post date GOSE's comments on deposit version of the Plan, after which policy for this particular ASL was unchanged. Following the guidance in paragraph 2.7 of PPG2, I consider that these issues can only be resolved at strategic policy level, rather than through a Local Plan review. In the meantime therefore I recommend that the safeguarded land designation should remain.

9.1.33 Setting aside the matter of whether the AONB designation means that the site was genuinely capable of development I have considered whether any other matters would make the site unsuitable for future development. The Council's evidence was that the highway network in this part of High Wycombe, and along the Amersham Road corridor in particular, would be unable to cope with predicted traffic flows from development of the whole site without unacceptable levels of congestion. This problem could be overcome by providing a new road from Kingshill Road to White Hill, shown as a safeguarded line on the Proposals Map. I deal with objections to this in section 7.20 of the report, where I concluded that there was no real need to protect the route given the likely prospects for development of both the site on along the protected line. The road would have severely adverse consequences on the environment of another part of the AONB and Four Ashes Conservation Area, and for wildlife interests, which would have to be assessed in any decision to proceed with development on Grange Farm itself. However, there are no technical constraints which would prevent the provision of a suitable access to the site.

9.1.34 I have taken into account the evidence of the Grange Action Group concerning the ecology of the site, and the value of the existing habitats, which supplements the limited data contained in the Council's surveys. As a general point, the site is large enough to allow for any detailed scheme to take into account the need to secure the measures to deal with protected species such as badgers. It may be that some areas of the site would need to be set aside from development to protect other valuable habitats, for example for moths, but the need to protect wildlife interests would not prevent development of very substantial areas of the site.

9.1.35 Similar arguments apply to those areas of the site with historic associations, such as Ladies Mile and the area around the farm buildings themselves. The site helps to form a break between Widmer End and the Terriers area of High Wycombe and some loss of community identity may result if the whole site were developed. However, as the Council suggest, a green wedge based on land in the western half of the site could minimise this disadvantage.

9.1.36 The agricultural land value of the sites is mainly class 3B, with some areas of grade 3A. Again, in the context of the advice of paragraphs 2.17 and 2.18 of PPG7, as revised by the Minister in March 2001, the loss of some best and most versatile agricultural land would not be an overriding constraint.

9.1.37 In summary therefore, the designation of the site within the AONB is a highly significant constraint to ASL designation. If strategic policy continues to confirm the status of the site as safeguarded land, its landscape quality is likely to be a critical factor in its ranking towards or at the bottom of any list of competing development sites.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- GB/1/12 No modification

GB1ii: SAFEGUARDED LAND – TERRIERS FARM

The Objections

See Appendix 9B

Summary of Objections

- (a) Add to local road congestion, noise and airborne pollution.
- (b) Destruction of an area of versatile farmland.
- (c) Loss of area of informal amenity and recreation.
- (d) Destruction of a valuable natural environment.
- (e) Filling of a strategic gap.
- (f) Reduction of quality of living environment in the vicinity.
- (g) Conflict with the following policies and advice;
 - Government policy, advice and reports
 - European Environmental Directives
 - Agenda 21
 - SERPLAN's Draft Development Strategy for the South East to 2016
 - Environmental Guidelines for the Management of Roads in the Chilterns AONB
 - Draft Design Guidelines for Development within the Chilterns AONB
 - Buckinghamshire County Structure Plan
 - Wycombe District Council strategic aims
 - other policies within the Local Plan, including AONB
 - sequential development
 - sustainable development
- (h) Cause unacceptable demands on the local water supply infrastructure.
- (i) Local services and facilities are not adequate to support additional population.
- (j) Affect the value of properties in the immediate surrounding area.
- (k) Brownfield land should be used instead.
- (l) Development should be distributed over a much wider area and not built as one massive development.
- (m) The site should be used for recreation – a 'Millennium' woodland could be planted on the site instead of proposed development.
- (n) Site should be used for a Park and Ride.
- (o) Setting an undesirable precedent.
- (p) No sustainable need for development of the site.
- (q) Overwhelming public opposition to the proposal.
- (r) Safeguarded Land designation should be deleted and replaced with Local Landscape Area, Conservation Area, Strategic Gap or Green Belt status.
- (s) Visually intrusive from the AONB.
- (t) Development would threaten the Four Ashes Conservation Area and Listed Buildings at Grange Farm.

- (u) The site is well located in relation to other development, roads and facilities and should therefore not be safeguarded, but released for housing during the local plan period.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.1.38 I deal in full with objections that the site should be allocated for mixed-uses, but primarily housing, in section 3.2.4 of my report above. These include the possibility of a park and ride facility. I concluded that Terriers Farm was the most suitable of the ASLs to make good a shortfall of land to meet Structure Plan housing targets, to be programmed after all the available previously developed sites have been taken up. For the reasons explained there, which also took into account evidence in support of these objections, it follows that I consider the site should not be included within the green belt.

9.1.39 In summary, I consider Terriers Farm is a high performing site where new housing development would form a logical urban extension to High Wycombe. In comparison with other sites it lies in a relatively good position for those residents without access to a car to be able to reach a variety of facilities and services in High Wycombe by other modes of transport. I disagree with the Council and residents about the landscape value of the site, which is separated from the adjoining AONB by the firm boundary along Ladies Mile. Development could be designed to retain a green wedge through the middle of the site, retaining a link between the countryside of Grange Farm and the Kings Wood area to the south. I have no firm evidence of infrastructure constraints, such as access or water supply, that could not be overcome and the most important features of wildlife interest could be protected. The possible effect of development on the value of nearby property, if any, is not a planning matter.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- GB/1/13 Delete the safeguarded land designation on the Proposals Map and the reference to the site in paragraph 9.08 of the Plan and allocate for housing in the phase 2006-2011.

GB1iii: SAFEGUARDED LAND – GOMM VALLEY (INCLUDING ASHWELLS AND PIMMS CLOSE)

The Objections

See Appendix 9C

Summary of Objections

- (a) Brownfield land should be used before greenfield.
- (b) Quiet, rural nature of the Gomm Valley would be destroyed.
- (c) Destruction of the last remaining dry valley in Wycombe.
- (d) Objection to the 'downgrading' of Gomm Valley from Area of Special Restraint to Safeguarded Land.
- (e) Destruction of flora and fauna habitats, including impact on Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) and Biological Notification Site (BNS).

- (f) Loss of agricultural land.
- (g) Development would represent a visual intrusion within the landscape.
- (h) Loss of area for recreation.
- (i) Loss of important corridor of undeveloped land between Penn/Tylers Green and High Wycombe.
- (j) Area is unsuitable for long term development.
- (k) Contrary to previous assessments of the development potential of the site:
 - District Council's Planning, Environment and Transport Committee of 7/4/98.
 - Comparative Site Assessment
 - Gillespies Report
- (l) Contrary to other policies in the local plan, specifically L1, G10, T1c and T1d.
- (m) Gomm Valley should be designated a Local Landscape Area.
- (n) Overloading of local highway network.
- (o) Site not easily accessible by public transport.
- (p) Development would make rest of the valley highly vulnerable to further development.
- (q) The proposal is unsustainable in environmental terms.
- (r) Gomm Valley, including Pimms Grove should be allocated for housing to serve the needs of High Wycombe.
- (s) Delete Abbey Barn North, Abbey Barn South and Wycombe Marsh Sewage Treatment Works and substitute Gomm Valley with an allocation of up to 600 dwellings.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.1.40 I deal extensively with a number of objections concerning parts and the whole of the Gomm Valley mainly in section 3.2.4, but also in sections 7.2 and 9.1 above. These parts of my report took into account all of the representations about the site. For the reasons set out there I consider that the landscape quality of the valley is such that development should not take place during this Plan. In my view other sites may be more favourably placed in any list of potential development opportunities in the longer term future. Parts of the site, including the SSSI, would need to be protected for wildlife conservation and the retention of a break in development between High Wycombe and Tylers Green would be highly desirable. Although development would involve some loss of best and most versatile agricultural land, government advice in PPG7 indicates that need not be an overriding constraint to development, depending on other factors.

9.1.41 However, there is limited land around High Wycombe to meet long term development needs, which are likely to continue in some form or other. In these circumstances I consider the site should be retained as safeguarded land (ASL) to meet this requirement. In the absence of a clear need to release all or part of the site, these comments apply equally to its constituent parts including Ashwells, Pimms Close and Pimms Grove/Gomm Farm as to the whole. Government policy in PPG2 states that green belt boundaries should be changed only in exceptional circumstances, but there have been no material changes on the ground since the last Local Plan inquiry. I therefore recommend that the safeguarded land designation should be retained.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- GB/1/14 No modification

GB1iii: GOMMS FARM

The Objections

0378/8 George Wimpey Plc

Summary of Objections

(a) Abbey Barn North, Abbey Barn South and Wycombe Marsh Sewage Treatment Works should be deleted. Gomms Farm should be allocated for 500 dwellings.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.1.42 My immediately preceding comments in para.9.1.42 above apply to this objection. I have dealt in full with individual objections concerning housing proposals on all the sites mentioned in his objection, together with their comparative merits in section 3.2. Although this site is not recommended for development during the life of this Plan, I consider it should be retained as safeguarded land to meet future needs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

GB/1/15 No modification

GB1iii: PIMMS GROVE

The Objections

0378/10 George Wimpey Plc

Summary of Objections

(a) Abbey Barn North, Abbey Barn South and Wycombe Marsh Sewage Treatment Works should be deleted. Site at Pimms Grove should be allocated as an H2 housing site.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.1.43 The same comments as those made in relation to Gomm Farm (see para 9.1.43 above) apply to this site. I have dealt with the relative merits of all the safeguarded land at High Wycombe in section 3.2 of my report, which also contains my findings on site specific objections. I consider that this part of the Gomm Valley ASL should be retained to meet long term development needs and should not be developed in place of other sites allocated in the Plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS

GB/1/16 No modification

GB1iv: LANE END ROAD, SANDS

The Objections

0010/3	Banner Homes
0368/7	Chiltern District Council – Planning Department
0374/4	The Countryside Agency
0391/1	Ian & Christine Shadbolt
0974/3	The Chiltern Society
1082/1	Sands Residents Association
1107/1	Mrs M Leonard
1115/2	Chilterns Conference
1129/2	D J Hide
1130/2	Mrs H L Hide
1161/1	Mrs M Evans
1517/1	Mr & Mrs Duke
2008/1	R M McLelland FRICS

Summary of Objections

- (a) This site should be developed for residential development. There are problems to be overcome with some of the other Safeguarded sites and it would therefore be better to release this Lane End Road site.
- (b) The identification of Safeguarded land within the AONB conflicts with the purpose of AONB designation/AONB policy. Safeguarded land designation should therefore be deleted.
- (c) Site should be designated Green Belt instead of Safeguarded land.
- (d) Increased pollution if the site is developed.
- (e) Increase in traffic adding to existing congestion in this part of Wycombe.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.1.44 I deal in detail with the objection that the site should be allocated for residential development in section 3.2.4 of my report. In making my recommendation on this issue, I took into account other objections that the ASL designation should be removed and the site included in the green belt. Many of the same policy considerations set out in my discussion of objections to ASL designation of Grange Farm apply to this site. Both sites are ASLs and the total area of both lies within the AONB. In summary, the designation of the site within the AONB is a highly significant constraint to development, despite the ASL designation. If strategic policy continues to confirm the status of the site as safeguarded land, its landscape quality is likely to be a critical factor in its ranking towards or at the bottom of any list of competing development sites.

9.1.45 However, if the site continues to be needed in the long term there are no other overriding constraints to development. The issue of the power line crossing the site could be addressed, possibly at high cost. I consider that adequate access could be obtained, and the loss of some grade 3A agricultural land would not be an overriding constraint. Government policy in PPG2 states that green belt boundaries should be changed only in exceptional circumstances, or following approved changes to a Structure Plan. I therefore recommend that the safeguarded land designation should be retained.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- GB/1/17 No modification

GB1v: SAFEGUARDED LAND – SLATE MEADOW

The Objections

0065/3	K C & B A Harris
0181/1	Mark Wooster
0483/5	Wooburn Parish Council
0709/3	Bryant Homes Technical Services Ltd
0730/2	Mrs Dinnie Hawthorne
1034/1	P Howe-Davies
1646/1	John Dalton

Summary of Objections

- (a) Slate Meadow should be kept as Green Space.
- (b) Site should be designated as Green Belt.
- (c) Site is an important gap between Bourne End and Wooburn.
- (d) Safeguarded land allocation should be deleted and replaced with a housing allocation of 150 dwellings.
- (e) Woodbury Cottages, Eastern Drive, Cores End should be excluded from the Slate Meadow area of Safeguarded land, to allow for possible residential development.
- (f) The site is needed now and should not be designated as Safeguarded land. Instead, it should be designated and developed for leisure/recreation with possibly some housing. The Bourne End/High Wycombe railway line should be reopened as a cycleway/footpath.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.1.46 I deal extensively with objections concerning a housing allocation on parts and the whole of Slate Meadow mainly in section 3.2.6, but also in section 9.1 above. For the reasons set out there I consider that development should not take place during this Plan. However, although the site does not have enjoy such good access to the wide range of commercial, employment and community facilities as other safeguarded sites in High Wycombe, it has other advantages that make it suitable for long term development. The land around High Wycombe, Bourne End and Marlow to meet long term development needs, which are likely to continue in some form or other, is limited. In these circumstances I consider the site should be retained as safeguarded land (ASL) to meet this requirement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- GB/1/18

GB2: DEVELOPMENT IN THE GREEN BELT

The Objections

0076/1	<i>Hughenden Parish Council</i>
0366/6	Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead – Planning Policy Unit
0831/18	Miss M B Messenger

0872/4	Government Office for the South East
0956/3	R Lawton
1006/6	Mr D J Giles
1218/1	R J Newell
1319/3	Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food
1429/1	Christopher Dennis
1475/2	Mr D V Baker
1798/2	Buckinghamshire County Council – Environmental Services Department
1806/1	Country Landowners Association
1944/1	Mr D J Palmer

PIC 9/3 Objections

1584/74	The Marlow Group (comprising J D Burnham, F R W Dagg, J A G Griffith, M C Schonegevel, K M R Post, W K Purdie, S C Warren)
1739/6	Lord Carrington's Grandchildren's Settlement
2063/12	Wycombe Summit/Wycombe Option Ltd
2123/1	Margaret Drage

Summary of Objections

- (a) Reference to affordable housing in criterion (iii) should be deleted. Affordable housing should not be allowed in the Green Belt.
- (b) Change criterion (iii) to make clear that land for affordable housing will only be released exceptionally.
- (c) Wording not wholly in accordance with PPG2 or Structure Plan, including (i) relating to agriculture and forestry buildings.
- (d) Small loss of Green Belt should be allowed when this allows for traffic and environmental improvements.
- (e) Green Belt should not have its own chapter. AONB and Green Belt policies should be in the same section.
- (f) Term 'very special circumstances' should be better defined.
- (g) More AONB should be designated as Green Belt to ensure its protection, and more agricultural land as AONB.
- (h) Mineral extraction should be listed as one of the exceptions to the general presumption against development in the Green Belt.
- (i) Objections to the change of wording in PIC9/3:
 - 'in exceptional circumstances' should be deleted
 - Wording in the policy allowing for ancillary buildings relating to outdoor sport and recreation should be reinstated.
 - PIC wording in (ii) is no better than that in the Deposit Plan, as it still allows sporadic built development.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.2.1 This policy sets out general requirements for the control of development in the green belt, reflecting Policy GB3 of the Structure Plan and the policies in PPG2. A number of objections have been conditionally withdrawn following PICs 9/3 and 9/13 which sought to address a number of objectors' concerns. I consider it unnecessary to deal with these points in detail where I accept the revised policy wording.

9.2.2 The deletion of 'essential' in criterion (i) accords with PPG2. Adding another category of uses associated with agriculture would widen the policy beyond the intention of PPG2 that development in the green belt should be very strictly controlled.

9.2.3 The criterion concerning outdoor sport accurately reflects the advice in PPG2, which provides for only those ancillary buildings essential to enjoyment of the sporting activity itself.

9.2.4 Paragraph 18 and Annex B of PPG3 allow for the provision of affordable housing in green belts, in exceptional circumstances, reflecting the advice in Circular 6/98. Policy GB2, cross-referenced to Policy H12, now accords with this advice. The use of the phrase in exceptional circumstances properly reflects the terminology in PPG2 and should be retained.

9.2.5 I concur with the Council that to amend the policy to cater for special situations where a small loss of green belt land might be outweighed by the traffic and environmental benefits would undermine its effectiveness. PPG2 states that green belt boundaries should only be altered exceptionally and does not define 'very special circumstances'. The Plan correctly identifies what types of development are appropriate within the green belt; all other proposals have to be determined on their own merits against the general presumption against them.

9.2.6 The issue of mineral extraction is not addressed by this Plan, as the proposed change to the explanatory text helpfully explains.

9.2.7 AONB and green belt designations are quite different and to link them in the Plan would cause confusion. The primary aim of the AONB is to preserve the natural beauty of the landscape; the aim of green belt policy is to keep land open for structural planning reasons. I consider that the detailed level of control in the green belt required to meet national policy justifies a separate chapter in the Plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- GB/2/1 Modify the Plan in accordance with PICs 9/3 and 9/13

GB2: TRALEE FARM, SOUTH OF HOLMER GREEN (AS139)

The Objections

0709/1 Bryant Homes Technical Services Ltd

Summary of Objections

(a) Site should be removed from the Green Belt and designated as Safeguarded Land.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.2.8 I have dealt with essentially the same objection in section 9.1 above. For the same reasons, principally the absence of exceptional circumstances to justify a change to green belt boundaries, I recommend against this objection also.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- GB/2/2 No modification

GB2: TREMARTYN, HAMMERSLEY LANE, TYLERS GREEN (AS140)

The Objections

0708/2 Mr & Mrs C G Jamison, Mrs C Leslie & others

Summary of Objections

(a) Site should be removed from the Green Belt and designated for housing.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.2.9 I dealt in detail with a related objection that the site should be developed for housing in section 3.2.4 above. For the reasons set out there, I consider that the site should be retained in the green belt. To allocate the site for housing land would fundamentally undermine the permanent boundaries of the green belt, one of its most important characteristics. In the absence of any approved Structure Plan boundary changes there were no exceptional reasons to remove the site from the green belt.

RECOMMENDATIONS

GB/2/3 No modification

GB2: WELLESBOURNE, TERRIERS

The Objections

1125/2 Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College

Summary of Objections

(a) Site should be removed from the green belt.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.2.10 The site is a triangular shaped parcel of land to the north of High Wycombe that forms part of the playing fields of Buckingham Chilterns University College. The college site extends to the south of the site and consists of playing fields and a former secondary modern school. The site is in both the AONB and green belt, and outside any recognised settlement boundary.

9.2.11 A key facet of the green belt is its permanence; PPG2 states that the boundaries of the green belt should be changed only as a result of approved Structure Plan alterations or in exceptional circumstances. The College argues that the green belt designation is overly restrictive, as it would not allow the potential development of this part of the College. The College is an important employer and makes a significant contribution to the local community. A recent application to develop an all weather pitch on the site for sporting use was turned down on green belt grounds. Whilst I recognise the local significance of the College, I consider that its possible expansion and any potential contribution to the community would not warrant the removal of the site from the green belt. The site continues to meet green belt functions of preventing the spread of High Wycombe to the north, the encroachment of urban land into the countryside, and the development of urban land. There has not been a recommendation in the Structure Plan to alter the green belt boundaries in this location and I consider that no

exceptional circumstances, such as the national need for development, exist to justify the removal of the site from the green belt.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- GB/2/4 No modification

GB2: GREEN FARM, HIGH WYCOMBE

The Objections

1578/1 M J Jeanes (Group) Ltd

Summary of Objections

- (a) Fifty acres of land at Green Farm is proposed for residential development: Green Belt boundary should be revised accordingly.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.2.12 I deal in detail with the residential allocation issue in section 3.2.4 above, and with another objection that the site should be an ASL in section 9.1 above. For the reasons explained in those parts of the report, I consider that the site should stay in the green belt. There has not been a recommendation in the Structure Plan to alter the green belt boundaries in this location and I consider that no exceptional circumstances, such as the national need for development, exist to justify the removal of the site from the green belt.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- GB/2/4 No Modification

GB2: LAND AT PRIMROSE HILL, WIDMER END

The Objections

1053/1 The Executors of the late Miss G M Pearce

Summary of Objections

- (a) Site should be excluded from the Green Belt to allow for limited infilling.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.2.13 The site consists of a roughly rectangular area of land to the east of Widmer End. The site lies in the Green Belt, outside the settlement boundary for High Wycombe. In general terms new housing in the green belt conflicts with government policy in PPG2 and in PPG3. My comments in the housing chapter about the need for more housing on 'greenfield' land equally to this site. While I identified a shortfall of allocated land to meet Structure Plan requirements to 2011, I consider that this could be met for the most part by the allocation of a major site for

400 dwellings at Terriers Farm, High Wycombe. Therefore I find no need to identify any additional land outside the main urban areas. Even if there were, Policy H2 of the Structure Plan states that land releases should take place outside the green belt. The Plan safeguards other areas excluded from the green belt for possible development in the longer term.

9.2.14 Green belt sites may only be considered for housing as an exception, where they may prove more sustainable than other options. This site lies within Accessibility Zone 5 and that argument does not apply with any real force. A key characteristic of the green belt is its permanence; PPG2 states that its boundaries should not be changed unless alterations to the Structure Plan have been approved or other exceptional circumstances exist. In this case the site continues to meet the green belt functions of preventing the spread of the north east side of Widmer End, the merging of Widmer End with Holmer Green, safeguarding the countryside from encroachment and encouraging the development of urban land.

9.2.15 The site consists of a number of sporadic dwellings and commercial buildings interspersed with open land. Although these buildings are fairly close towards the northern end of the site, overall the site has a far more open appearance than the more dense urban form of Widmer End to the east. I consider the site still makes a significant contribution to this part of the green belt on the urban fringe. Even a further modest increase in the amount of built development on the site would infill open gaps and would have a detrimental effect on the loose knit form of the site. Similarly whilst some the site has been built on, there are large areas of the site that remain open land. To suggest that the entire site could be considered as previously developed land would be to over simplify a complex situation and would not justify the release of the site from the green belt. The removal of green belt designation would conflict with established policies to protect the green belt. I have found no exceptional circumstances to justify the removal of the site from the green belt.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- GB/2/5 No Modification

GB2: GOMM VALLEY

The Objections

0470/3	Mr & Mrs A Williams
0560/1	Mr D H Hughes
0615/4	Kevan Michael Keegan
0810/4	Pamela & Charles Hoffman
1463/2	Mr P J Barlow
1513/2	Ms K A Marrinan

Summary of Objections

- (a) Kings Wood and Gomm Valley should be designated as Green Belt to maintain the character of Penn village. Some Green Belt should be taken away on the west side of High Wycombe for a new town.
- (b) The statement in paragraph 9.06 regarding changes to the Green Belt boundary should be withdrawn: Gomm Valley and the Grange Farm areas of Safeguarded land should then be added to the Green Belt.
- (c) The Gomm Valley (including Ashwells) should be classified as Green Belt.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.2.16 I deal extensively with a number of objections concerning parts and the whole of the Gomm Valley mainly in section 3.2.4, but also in sections 7.2 and 9.1 above. For the reasons set out there I consider that the landscape quality of the valley is such that development should not take place during this Plan, and other sites might be considered nearer to the top of the list of potential development opportunities in the longer term future. However, The land around High Wycombe to meet long term development needs, which are likely to continue in some form or other, is limited. In these circumstances I consider the site should be retained as safeguarded land (ASL) to meet this requirement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- GB/2/6 No modification

GB2: LAND ADJACENT GLORY MILL COTTAGE, WOOBURN (AS56)

The Objections

0348/2 Dawn Holdings SA

Summary of Objections

- (a) Site should be excluded from the Green Belt and allocated as a housing site for a single dwelling.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.2.17 The site consists of a small triangular shaped parcel of land to the east of Wooburn Moor, immediately to the north of the M40. The site is in the green belt and its outside of any recognised settlement boundary. For the reasons I have stated at section 3.2.5, I consider that the site should not be removed from the green belt as it serves important green belt functions and there is no necessity for the allocation of additional housing sites. There has not been a recommendation in the Structure Plan to alter the green belt boundaries in this location and I consider that no exceptional circumstances, such as the national need for development, exist to justify the removal of the site from the green belt.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- GB/2/7 No modification

GB2: SLATE MEADOW, WOOBURN GREEN

The Objections

0181/2 Mark Wooster

Summary of Objections

- (a) Site should be upgraded to Green Belt.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.2.18 I deal extensively with a number of objections concerning a housing allocation on parts and the whole of Slate Meadow mainly in section 3.2.6, but also in section 9.1 above. For the reasons set out there I consider that development should not take place during this Plan. However, although the site does not have enjoy such good access to the wide range of commercial, employment and community facilities as other safeguarded sites in High Wycombe, it has other advantages that make it suitable for long term development. The land around High Wycombe, Bourne End and Marlow to meet long term development needs, which are likely to continue in some form or other, is limited. In these circumstances I consider the site should be retained as safeguarded land (ASL) to meet this requirement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- GB/2/8 No modification

GB2: JACKSON'S FIELD, PRINCES ROAD, CORES END

The Objections

1020/1 Reit Asset Management

Summary of Objections

- (a) Jackson's Field should be removed from the Green Belt and designated as Safeguarded Land.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.2.19 I have dealt with what is essentially the same objection in section 3.1 above. For the reasons set out there, I consider that the site should be retained in the green belt.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- GB/2/9 No modification

GB2: FOLEY LODGE, HAWKS HILL

The Objections

1230/1 Mr Alan L Warnes

Summary of Objections

- (a) Site should be removed from the Green Belt and placed instead in the Hawks Hill Residential Character Zone.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.2.20 The site comprises a detached house and garden on the west side of Hawks Hill, within

the greenbelt and opposite the Hawks Hill/Harvest Hill Policy area. I deal with the request for inclusion within this special policy area in section 8.16 of my report above. PPG2 states that green belt boundaries should not be changed unless alterations to the Structure Plan have been approved, or other exceptional circumstances exist. Neither of these criteria has been met in this case. The site forms part of a less densely developed or open area separating the Hawks Hill area from the main settlement of Bourne End. Its designation as green belt helps to prevent the encroachment of new building into the countryside and also meets the policy objective of assisting urban regeneration. To allow the change to this green belt boundary would undermine the effectiveness of the policy by creating pressure for further releases that would be hard to resist. No exceptional circumstances have been put forward by the objector to support such a change.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- GB/2/10 No modification

GB2: BRANTRIDGE, NEW ROAD, BOURNE END (AS15)
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The Objections

0733/1 Mr Arthur Wood

Summary of Objections

- (a) Site should be deleted from the Green Belt and designated for housing.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.2.21 I dealt in detail with a related objection that the site should be developed for housing in section 3.2.6 above. For the reasons set out there, I consider that the site should be retained in the green belt. To allocate the site for housing land would fundamentally undermine the permanence of the green belt, one of its most important characteristics. In the absence of any approved Structure Plan boundary changes and any exceptional reasons to remove the site from the green belt, to modify the boundary would be in clear conflict with long established government policy to protect the green belt.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- GB/2/11 No modification

GB2: WESSEX ROAD INDUSTRIAL ESTATE, BOURNE END
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The Objections

0607/2 Glen House Estates

Summary of Objections

- (a) Site should be removed from the Green Belt and incorporated into the industrial estate.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.2.22 The site is rectangular shaped parcel of land adjacent to the western side of the Wessex Road industrial estate. PPG2 states that green belt boundaries should not be changed unless alterations to the Structure Plan have been approved, or other exceptional circumstances exist. Neither of these criteria has been met in this case.

9.2.23 At the time of the inquiry there was considerable demand for premises throughout the District, and particularly the Bourne End area. However the Council argued that the local economy was in some danger of overheating and that there was no need to allocate any more employment land. I concluded that this strategy was likely to achieve the right balance in terms of demand and supply for new employment land. In any event other sites on land outside the green belt would be available if the need arose. I consider there are no exceptional circumstances to justify the release of this part of the green belt, which continues to fulfil the important functions of preventing the encroachment of Bourne End onto countryside to the east, preventing the settlement from merging with the Hawks Hill/Harvest Hill area and encouraging urban regeneration.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- GB/2/12 No modification

GB2: LAND ADJACENT TO HILL FARM, MARLOW BOTTOM
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The Objections

0937/2 Miss P M Kimber

Summary of Objections

(a) Site should be allocated as Safeguarded Land.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.2.24 I dealt in detail with a related objection that the site should be developed for housing in section 3.2.6 above. For the reasons set out there, I consider that the site should be retained in the green belt. To allocate the site for housing land would fundamentally undermine the permanent boundaries of the green belt, one of its most important characteristics. In the absence of any approved Structure Plan boundary changes there were no exceptional reasons to remove the site from the green belt.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- GB/2/13 No modification

GB2: LAND OFF NEW ROAD MARLOW BOTTOM

The Objections

0840/53 Marlow and District Chamber of Trade & Commerce

Summary of Objections

(a) Site should be allocated for residential development.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.2.25 I dealt in detail with a related objection that the site should be developed for housing in section 3.2.6 above. For the reasons set out there, I consider that the site should be retained in the green belt. To allocate the site for housing land would fundamentally undermine the permanent boundaries of the green belt, one of its most important characteristics. In the absence of any approved Structure Plan boundary changes there were no exceptional reasons to remove the site from the green belt.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- GB/2/14 No modification

GB2: KINGSLEY DRIVE, MARLOW BOTTOM

The Objections

0557/1 Mr J Perkins

Summary of Objections

(a) Amend Green Belt boundary to allow site to be developed for community/residential development, to meet proven need of local organisations.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.2.26 I dealt in detail with a related objection that the site should be developed for housing in section 3.2.6 above. For the reasons set out there, I consider that the site should be retained in the green belt. To allocate the site for housing land would fundamentally undermine the permanent boundaries of the green belt, one of its most important characteristics. In the absence of any approved Structure Plan boundary changes there were no exceptional reasons to remove the site from the green belt.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- GB/2/15 No modification

GB2: LAND NORTH EAST OF MARLOW & BYPASS

The Objections

0840/49 Marlow and District Chamber of Trade & Commerce

Summary of Objections

(a) Site should be allocated for either housing or a hotel.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.2.27 I dealt in detail with a related objection that the site should be developed for housing in section 3.2.6 above. For the reasons set out there, I consider that the site should be retained in the green belt. To allocate the site for housing land would fundamentally undermine the permanent boundaries of the green belt, one of its most important characteristics. In the absence of any approved Structure Plan boundary changes there were no exceptional reasons to remove the site from the green belt.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- GB/2/16 No modification

GB2: LAND ADJACENT TO BOVINGDON GREEN

The Objections

0840/35 Marlow and District Chamber of Trade & Commerce

Summary of Objections

- (a) Site should be added to Policy GB4 (Built-Up Areas within the Green Belt).

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.2.28 I dealt in detail with a related objection that the site should be developed for housing in section 3.2.6 above. For the reasons set out there, I consider that the site should be retained in the green belt. To allocate the site for housing land would fundamentally undermine the permanent boundaries of the green belt, one of its most important characteristics. In the absence of any approved Structure Plan boundary changes there were no exceptional reasons to remove the site from the green belt.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- GB/2/17 No modification

GB2: LAND AT SPINFIELD LANE, MARLOW

The Objections

0731/3 Mr R Rockell

Summary of Objections

- (a) Settlement boundary should be changed to allow this site to be used for residential development.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.2.29 I dealt in detail with a related objection that the site should be developed for housing in

section 3.2.6 above. For the reasons set out there, I consider that the site should be retained in the green belt. To allocate the site for housing land would fundamentally undermine the permanent boundaries of the green belt, one of its most important characteristics. In the absence of any approved Structure Plan boundary changes there were no exceptional reasons to remove the site from the green belt.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- GB/2/18 No modification

GB2: LAND BETWEEN CHALKPIT LANE AND SPINFIELD LANE, MARLOW
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The Objections

0840/33 Marlow and District Chamber of Trade & Commerce
1027/1 Cala Homes (South) Ltd

Summary of Objections

- (a) Site should be allocated for residential development.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.2.30 I dealt in detail with a related objection that the site should be developed for housing in section 3.2.6 above. For the reasons set out there, I consider that the site should be retained in the green belt. To allocate the site for housing land would fundamentally undermine the permanent boundaries of the green belt, one of its most important characteristics. In the absence of any approved Structure Plan boundary changes there were no exceptional reasons to remove the site from the green belt.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- GB/2/19 No modification

GB2: LAND SOUTH OF SEYMOUR PLAIN, MARLOW
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The Objections

0840/45 Marlow and District Chamber of Trade & Commerce

Summary of Objections

- (b) These 3 sites should be allocated for residential development.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.2.31 I dealt in detail with a related objection that the site should be developed for housing in section 3.2.6 above. For the reasons set out there, I consider that the site should be retained in the green belt. To allocate the site for housing land would fundamentally undermine the permanent boundaries of the green belt, one of its most important characteristics. In the

absence of any approved Structure Plan boundary changes there were no exceptional reasons to remove the site from the green belt.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- GB/2/20 No modification

GB2: LITTLEWORTH ROAD, DOWNLEY

The Objections

1695/7 Mr A Rush

Summary of Objections

- (a) The Green Belt boundary around High Wycombe is outdated and illogical and should be amended (plan submitted).

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.2.32 The site consists of a small rectangular field on the eastern edge of Downley; the site is in both the green belt and the AONB but outside any recognised settlement boundary. A key facet of the green belt is its permanence; PPG2 states that its boundaries should not be changed unless alterations to the Structure Plan have been approved or other exceptional circumstances exist. In this case the site continues to meet the green belt functions of preventing the spread of the urban area of High Wycombe, safeguarding the countryside to the north west of High Wycombe from encroachment and encouraging the development of urban land. The site consists of an area of overgrown scrub surrounded by hedgerows and is visually linked to the open land to the east, and the site is very different in appearance to the dense urban form to the west. I consider the site makes a significant contribution to this part of the green belt on the urban fringe. The boundaries of the green belt are logically drawn in this locality as they follow the line of a public footpath and boundaries to rear gardens in the built up area to the west of the site, which constitutes a defensible boundary. There has not been a recommendation in the Structure Plan to alter the green belt boundaries in this location and I consider that no exceptional circumstances, such as the national need for development, exist to justify the removal of the site from the green belt.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- GB/2/21 No modification

GB2: LAND AT OAK FELL, DOWNLEY COMMON

The Objections

0508/22 Sir Francis Dashwood, Mr E Dashwood and the Dashwood Wycombe Trust

Summary of Objections

- (a) Site should be allocated for housing under H2.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.2.33 The site consists of a small square parcel of land on Downley Common to the north of High Wycombe. The site is within the green belt and AONB but outside any recognised settlement boundary. For the reasons I have stated at section 3.2.4, I consider that the site should not be removed from the green belt as it serves important green belt functions and there is no necessity for the allocation of additional housing sites. There has not been a recommendation in the Structure Plan to alter the green belt boundaries in this location and I consider that no exceptional circumstances, such as the national need for development, exist to justify the removal of the site from the green belt.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- GB/2/22 No modification

GB2: DOWNLEY FARM BARNS & FIELDS

The Objections

0508/21 Sir Francis Dashwood, Mr E Dashwood and the Dashwood Wycombe Trust

Summary of Objections

- (a) Site should be allocated for housing under H2.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.2.34 The site consists of a large irregularly shaped parcel of land at the north-western edge of High Wycombe. The site is located in the green belt and the AONB and is outside any recognised settlement boundary. For the reasons I have stated at section 3.2.5, I consider that the site should not be removed from the green belt as it serves important green belt functions and there is no necessity for the allocation of additional housing sites. There has not been a recommendation in the Structure Plan to alter the green belt boundaries in this location and I consider that no exceptional circumstances, such as the national need for development, exist to justify the removal of the site from the green belt.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- GB/2/23 No modification

GB2: CHORLEY ROAD ALLOTMENTS

The Objections

0508/23 Sir Francis Dashwood, Mr E Dashwood and the Dashwood Wycombe Trust

Summary of Objections

- (a) Site should be allocated for housing under H2.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.2.35 The site comprises an area of allotments on Chorley Road about half a kilometre to the north west of West Wycombe. The site is located in the green belt and the AONB, and is outside any recognised settlement boundary. For the reasons I have stated at section 3.2.7, I consider that the site should not be removed from the green belt as it serves important green belt functions and there is no necessity for the allocation of additional housing sites. There has not been a recommendation in the Structure Plan to alter the green belt boundaries in this location and I consider that no exceptional circumstances, such as the national need for development, exist to justify the removal of the site from the green belt.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- GB/2/24 No modification

GB2: LAND BETWEEN 94 & 116 CHORLEY ROAD

The Objections

0508/24 Sir Francis Dashwood, Mr E Dashwood and the Dashwood Wycombe Trust

Summary of Objections

(a) Site should be allocated for housing under H2.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.2.36 The site consists of a small rectangular plot of land in a gap at the northern end of a ribbon of houses about half a kilometre to the north west of West Wycombe. The site is located in the green belt and AONB and is outside any recognised settlement boundary. For the reasons I have stated at section 3.2.7, I consider that the site should not be removed from the green belt as it serves important green belt functions and there is no necessity for the allocation of additional housing sites. There has not been a recommendation in the Structure Plan to alter the green belt boundaries in this location and I consider that no exceptional circumstances, such as the national need for development, exist to justify the removal of the site from the green belt.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- GB/2/25 No modification

GB2: GRANGE FARM, SAUNDERTON

The Objections

0356/1 Hearing Dogs for Deaf People

Summary of Objections

- (a) Hearing Dogs for Deaf People is a charity that operates from the site. The charity seeks assurance that its use of the site is appropriate under the term 'very special circumstances' as contained in GB2.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.2.37 The site consists of an irregularly shaped parcel of land to the north east of Saunderton that lies in both the Green Belt and the AONB. The site lies outside any recognised settlement boundary. I note that the Council state that permission was granted for the change of use of the former agricultural buildings on the site to an office and training centre for hearing dogs for deaf people, but it is not within the remit of this report to issue any assurance regarding the acceptability of the site's current uses. I note that the objection has been conditionally withdrawn. There are no exceptional circumstances to justify a change to the green belt.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- GB/2/26 No modification

GB2: WEST'S YARD, SLOUGH LANE, SAUNDERTON

The Objections

0905/7 Kenneth Barnes

Summary of Objections

- (a) Site would be better used for additional housing.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.2.38 The site consists of a small industrial estate immediately to the south west of Saunderton, located in the green belt and AONB. I deal in more detail with other objections that the policy should be designated as a MDS in section 9.8 below. For the reasons I have stated at section 3.2.7 I consider that the site should not be removed from the green belt as it serves important green belt functions and there is no necessity for the allocation of additional housing sites. There has not been a recommendation in the Structure Plan to alter the green belt boundaries in this location and I consider that no exceptional circumstances, such as the national need for development, exist to justify the removal of the site from the green belt. Any planning applications for housing would be considered under the existing policy context for the green belt, whereby there would be a presumption against such development unless very special circumstances related to the current use and buildings on the site were demonstrated.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- GB/2/27 No modification

GB2: LAND ADJACENT WEST'S YARD, SAUNDERTON

The Objections

0508/35 Sir Francis Dashwood, Mr E Dashwood and the Dashwood Wycombe Trust.

Summary of Objections

(a) Site should be allocated for housing under Policy H2.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.2.39 The site comprises a large open field (4.6 hectares) on a valley slope immediately to the south of the village of Saunderton, within both the green belt and the AONB. For the reasons I have stated at section 3.2.7, I consider that the site should not be removed from the green belt as it serves important green belt functions, the benefit of which would not be outweighed by a potential park and rail scheme. There has not been a recommendation in the Structure Plan to alter the green belt boundaries in this location and I consider that no exceptional circumstances, such as the national need for development, exist to justify the removal of the site from the green belt.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- GB/2/28 No modification

GB2: LAND AT SAUNDERTON RAILWAY STATION

The Objections

0508/34 Sir Francis Dashwood, Mr E Dashwood and the Dashwood Wycombe Trust

Summary of Objections

(a) Site should be allocated for housing under Policy H2.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.2.40 The site consists of an irregular shaped parcel of land to the west of Saunderton close to the Railway Station and railway line. The site lies within both the green belt and AONB but outside any recognised settlement boundary. For the reasons I have stated at section 3.2.8, I consider that the site should not be removed from the green belt as it serves important green belt functions, the benefit of which would not be outweighed by a potential park and ride scheme, and there is no necessity for the allocation of additional housing sites. There has not been a recommendation in the Structure Plan to alter the green belt boundaries in this location and I consider that no exceptional circumstances, such as the national need for development, exist to justify the removal of the site from the green belt.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- GB/2/29 No modification

GB2: HUNTS HILL & LEFLAIVE CENTRE, NAPHILL

The Objections

1695/3 Mr A Rush
1695/8 Mr A Rush

Summary of Objections

- (a) Site should be allocated for either residential or commercial development.
- (b) The Green Belt boundary around Naphill is outdated and illogical and should be amended (plan submitted).

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.2.41 I dealt in detail with a related objection that the site should be developed for housing in section 3.2.4 above. For the reasons set out there, I consider that the site should be retained in the green belt. To allocate the site for housing land would fundamentally undermine the permanent boundaries of the green belt, one of its most important characteristics. In the absence of any approved Structure Plan boundary changes there were no exceptional reasons to remove the site from the green belt.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- GB/2/30 No modification

GB2: GRACE COTTAGE, CHURCH LANE, LACEY GREEN

The Objections

0970/3 Sarah Morgan

Summary of Objections

- (a) Site should be excluded from the Green Belt and included in the Settlement Boundary of Lacey Green.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.2.42 The site comprises a triangular small field to the west of Lacey Green adjacent to both the village's settlement boundary and Conservation Area. The site is located within both the green belt and AONB. For the reasons I have stated at section 3.2.8, I consider that the site should not be removed from the green belt as it serves important green belt functions and there is no necessity for the allocation of additional housing sites. There has not been a recommendation in the Structure Plan to alter the green belt boundaries in this location and I consider that no exceptional circumstances, such as the national need for development, exist to justify the removal of the site from the green belt.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- GB/2/31 No modification

GB2: LAND ADJACENT TO CULVERTON MANOR & FARM, PRINCES RISBOROUGH

The Objections

0841/1 Lance Adlam

Summary of Objections

- (a) Designate the paddocks north of Culverton Lane fronting Wycombe Road for residential development, and allow use of land for new slip road to the station to relieve Poppy Road.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.2.43 The site comprises two large detached houses in extensive grounds with mature trees and a farmhouse and its associated barns, yards and outbuildings. The site is adjacent to the southern built up edge of Princes Risborough on the A4010. The site is in both the green belt and AONB. For the reasons I have stated at section 3.2.7, I consider that the site should not be removed from the green belt as it serves important green belt functions. There is no necessity for the allocation of additional housing sites. There has not been a recommendation in the Structure Plan to alter the green belt boundaries in this location and I consider that no exceptional circumstances, such as the national need for development, exist to justify the removal of the site from the green belt. The value of potential highway improvements would be a material consideration in any assessment of a planning application in a green belt policy context.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- GB/2/32 No modification

GB2: WYCOMBE ROAD, PRINCES RISBOROUGH (AS94)

The Objections

0808/1 Linden Homes South East Ltd

Summary of Objections

- (a) Site should be removed from the Green Belt and either allocated for housing or designated Safeguarded Land.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.2.44 I have dealt with a related objection that the site should be allocated for housing in section 3.2.5 and considered its potential designation as an ASL in section 9.1 above. For the reasons stated there, I consider that in the absence of approved alterations in the Structure Plan or any exceptional circumstances the site should remain in the green belt.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- GB/2/33 No modification

GB2: PRINCES RISBOROUGH SCHOOL

The Objections

0350/1 Princes Risborough School
0379/20 Sport England
1449/1 Buckinghamshire County Council – Education Department

Summary of Objections

(a) Move the Green Belt boundary so that the school grounds northwest of the Upper Icknield Way are included within the settlement boundary and excluded from the Green Belt.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.2.45 This objection is considered in Section 10.3 of the report, which recommends that the green belt boundary should be amended to omit the whole of the school grounds and the school playing fields be allocated as green space.

9.2.46 PPG2 states that the boundaries of the green belt should be changed only as a result of approved Structure Plan alterations or in exceptional circumstances. In this case the school argue that the green belt boundary is an anomaly, because it cuts the curtilage in two. The site already contains a youth centre building, a hard surfaced playing area, a bus turning area and a small car park, with the remainder laid out as playing fields. It cannot be described as 'countryside', which has already suffered encroachment. While the site remains largely open, the green space notation under Policy L3 would help to retain this quality and prevent the outward sprawl of Princes Risborough. Re-alignment of the green belt along Icknield Way would remove an anomaly and create a very defensible boundary defined by a strong hedgerow belt, which continues the firm line of rear gardens to the north.

9.2.47 The school wishes to provide a new indoor sports hall on the objection site, which is the only available area for such development within the grounds. The Council appeared to accept the significant community benefits that would be provided by the construction of this facility, which could be managed in a way that allowed shared use by the school and general public. I consider that the combination of the current use of the site, the existence of the youth centre, the acknowledgement that another building would be allowed represent exceptional circumstances in this case.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- GB/2/34 Modify the Proposals Map by defining the GB2 boundary along the outside edge of the Princes Risborough School curtilage and designating the excluded area as green space.

GB2: RECTORY FARM & MONKS RISBOROUGH SCHOOL (AS62)

The Objections

1541/1 P Tapping

Summary of Objections

(a) Site should be removed from the Green Belt and designated for housing.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.2.48 I dealt in detail with a related objection that the site should be developed for housing in section 3.2.6 above. For the reasons set out there, I consider that the site should be retained in the green belt. To allocate the site for housing land would fundamentally undermine the permanence of the green belt, one of its most important characteristics. In the absence of any approved Structure Plan boundary changes and any exceptional reasons to remove the site from the green belt, to modify the boundary would be in clear conflict with long established government policy to protect the green belt.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- GB/2/35 No modification

GB2: WYCOMBE WANDERERS FOOTBALL GROUND
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The Objections

0508/36 Sir Francis Dashwood, Mr E Dashwood and the Dashwood Wycombe Trust

Summary of Objections

- (a) Leisure based uses eg golf driving range should be considered for the site, using the existing car parking.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.2.49 The site consists of an area of land next to Wycombe Wanderers Football Ground, which is located in both the Green Belt and the AONB. Whilst activities such as a golf driving range may be acceptable for the site in terms of green belt policy, an application for such a use could be addressed by the Plan's policies for protection of Green Belt and AONB. Policy RT16, which specifically addresses development involving Golf Courses and Driving Ranges, would also be applicable. Therefore it would involve the plan in an unnecessary level of detail to make an allocation for such a scale of use.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- GB/2/36 No modification

GB2: LAND NORTH OF HORNS LANE, BOOKER

The Objections

0818/3 Buckinghamshire County Council – Land & Property

Summary of Objections

- (a) Site should be excluded from the Green Belt.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.2.50 The site consists of an irregularly shaped paddock adjacent to Booker Common allotments. The site is in the Green Belt and outside of the AONB and any recognised settlement boundary. A key facet of the green belt is its permanence; PPG2 states that its boundaries should not be changed unless alterations to the Structure Plan have been approved or other exceptional circumstances exist. In this case the site continues to meet the green belt functions of preventing the spread of the western side of High Wycombe, the merging of High Wycombe with Lane End and encouraging the development of urban land. I do not consider that the green belt boundary has been illogically drawn in this instance.

9.2.51 The site is however quite well shielded and given its location next to the M40, it is not strongly linked to the surrounding open countryside. However I do not consider that this would be sufficient to overcome the harm to the green belt's functions and the wider policy harm that would occur as a result the release of the site. Similarly I do not consider that this site would be in anyway a more logical extension to High Wycombe than the safeguarded land further north along Lane End Road as both sites would involve a similar extension of the built up area of High Wycombe. There has not been a recommendation in the Structure Plan to alter the green belt boundaries in this location and I consider that no exceptional circumstances, such as the national need for development, exist to justify the removal of the site from the green belt.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- GB/2/37 No modification

GB2: BOOKER COMMON ALLOTMENTS

The Objections

0508/33 Sir Francis Dashwood, Mr E Dashwood and the Dashwood Wycombe Trust

Summary of Objections

- (a) Site should be allocated for housing under H2.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.2.52 The site consists of a roughly rectangular field, used as allotments, to the south west of High Wycombe. The site is in the green belt and abuts the AONB, and is not within any recognised settlement boundaries. For the reasons I have stated at section 3.2.4 I consider that the site should not be removed from the green belt as it serves important green belt functions and there is no necessity for the allocation of additional housing sites. There has not been a recommendation in the Structure Plan to alter the green belt boundaries in this location and I consider that no exceptional circumstances, such as the national need for development, exist to justify the removal of the site from the green belt.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- GB/2/38 No modification

GB2: LAND OFF SIMMONS WAY, LANE END

The Objections

0508/30 Sir Francis Dashwood, Mr E Dashwood and the Dashwood Wycombe Trust

Summary of Objections

(a) Site should be allocated for housing under H2.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.2.53 The site consists of a collection of mainly open sloping fields to the east of Lane End. The site is in both the green belt and AONB, and outside settlement boundary of Lane End. For the reasons I have stated at section 3.2.7 I consider that the site should not be removed from the green belt as it serves important green belt functions. There is no necessity for the allocation of additional housing sites. The benefit of possible improvements to public open space and affordable housing provision would have to be weighed against any harm to the green belt in consideration of any planning application for the site. There has not been a recommendation in the Structure Plan to alter the green belt boundaries in this location and I consider that no exceptional circumstances, such as the national need for development, exist to justify the removal of the site from the green belt.

RECOMMENDATIONS

□ GB/2/39 No modification

GB2: LAND OFF PARK LANE, LANE END

The Objections

0508/31 Sir Francis Dashwood, Mr E Dashwood and the Dashwood Wycombe Trust

Summary of Objections

(a) Site should be allocated for housing under H2.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.2.54 The site is located to the north east of Lane End between the village's settlement boundary and the embankment of the M40. The site is in both the green belt and the AONB. For the reasons I have stated at section 3.2.7, I consider that the site should not be removed from the green belt as it serves important green belt functions and there is no necessity for the allocation of additional housing sites. There has not been a recommendation in the Structure Plan to alter the green belt boundaries in this location and I consider that no exceptional circumstances, such as the national need for development, exist to justify the removal of the site from the green belt.

RECOMMENDATIONS

□ GB/2/40 No modification

GB2: LAND EAST OF SIDNEY HOUSE, DENHAM ROAD, LANE END

The Objections

0508/32 Sir Francis Dashwood, Mr E Dashwood and the Dashwood Wycombe Trust

Summary of Objections

(a) Site should be allocated for housing under H2.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.2.55 The site is located to the north of Lane End between the settlement boundary and the embankment of the M40. The site falls within both the green belt and the AONB. For the reasons I have stated at section 3.2.7 I consider that the site should not be removed from the green belt as it serves important green belt functions and there is no necessity for the allocation of additional housing sites. There has not been a recommendation in the Structure Plan to alter the green belt boundaries in this location and I consider that no exceptional circumstances, such as the national need for development, exist to justify the removal of the site from the green belt.

RECOMMENDATIONS

□ GB/2/41 No modification

GB2: FININGS FARM, LANE END

The Objections

1036/2 I & M Mebbourne

1036/4 I & M Mebbourne

Summary of Objections

(a) Site should either be taken out of the Green Belt to facilitate development, or policy should be changed to allow for development of Green Belt sites.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.2.56 The site comprises a rectangular grass field between two relatively isolated detached houses to the north of Lane End, outside the settlement boundary. The site is located in the green belt and the AONB and is immediately adjacent to the village's Conservation Area. For the reasons I have stated at section 3.2.8, I consider that the site should not be removed from the green belt as it serves important green belt functions. The benefit any possible improvements to nearby playing fields would have to be weighed against the harm to the green belt arising from any proposal for inappropriate housing development. There has not been a recommendation in the Structure Plan to alter the green belt boundaries in this location and I consider that no exceptional circumstances, such as the national need for development, exist to justify the removal of the site from the green belt.

RECOMMENDATIONS

□ GB/2/42 No modification

GB2: WHEELER END ALLOTMENTS

The Objections

0508/29 Sir Francis Dashwood, Mr E Dashwood and the Dashwood Wycombe Trust

Summary of Objections

(a) Site should be allocated for housing under H2.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.2.57 The site consists of two roughly square parcels of land adjacent to one another on Wheeler End Common, approximately half a kilometre to the north of Lane End. The site lies in the green belt and AONB, and is outside the village's settlement boundary and Wheeler End Common Conservation Area. For the reasons I have stated at section 3.2.8 I consider that the site should not be removed from the green belt as it serves important green belt functions, and there is no necessity for the allocation of additional housing sites. There has not been a recommendation in the Structure Plan to alter the green belt boundaries in this location and I consider that no exceptional circumstances, such as the national need for development, exist to justify the removal of the site from the green belt.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- GB/2/43 No modification

GB2: LAND WEST OF PIDDINGTON VILLAGE

The Objections

0508/27 Sir Francis Dashwood, Mr E Dashwood and the Dashwood Wycombe Trust

Summary of Objections

(a) Site should be allocated for housing under Policy H2.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.2.58 The site consists of large rectangular open field immediately to the west of Piddington. The site is in the green belt and AONB, and is outside of the village's settlement boundary. For the reasons I have stated at section 3.2.7 I consider that the site should not be removed from the green belt as it serves important green belt functions, and there is no necessity for the allocation of additional housing sites. There has not been a recommendation in the Structure Plan to alter the green belt boundaries in this location and I consider that no exceptional circumstances, such as the national need for development, exist to justify the removal of the site from the green belt.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- GB/2/43 No modification

GB2: LAND EAST OF PIDDINGTON VILLAGE

The Objections

0508/28 Sir Francis Dashwood, Mr E Dashwood and the Dashwood Wycombe Trust

Summary of Objections

(a) Site should be allocated for housing under Policy H2.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.2.59 The site consists of a roughly triangular field to the east of the village of Piddington. The site is located in both the green belt and the AONB and is immediately adjacent to, but outside, the settlement boundary of the village. For the reasons I have stated at section 3.2.8, I consider that the site should not be removed from the green belt as it serves important green belt functions, and there is no necessity for the allocation of additional housing sites. There has not been a recommendation in the Structure Plan to alter the green belt boundaries in this location and I consider that no exceptional circumstances, such as the national need for development, exist to justify the removal of the site from the green belt.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- GB/2/44 No modification

GB2: FIELD AT TOP OF OLD DASHWOOD HILL

The Objections

0508/25 Sir Francis Dashwood, Mr E Dashwood and the Dashwood Wycombe Trust

Summary of Objections

(a) Site should be allocated for housing under H2.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.2.60 The site comprises a flat rectangular parcel of land close to a short ribbon of housing on Old Dashwood Hill approximately 500 metres from Beacons Bottom. The site is in the green belt and AONB, and is outside of the settlement boundary of Beacons Bottom. For the reasons I have stated at section 3.2.7, I consider that the site should not be removed from the green belt as it serves important green belt functions, and there is no necessity for the allocation of additional housing sites. There has not been a recommendation in the Structure Plan to alter the green belt boundaries in this location and I consider that no exceptional circumstances, such as the national need for development, exist to justify the removal of the site from the green belt.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- GB/2/45 No modification

GB2: LAND AT BEACON'S BOTTOM

The Objections

0508/26 Sir Francis Dashwood, Mr E Dashwood and the Dashwood Wycombe Trust

Summary of Objections

- (a) Site should be allocated for housing under H2.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.2.61 The site comprises a rectangular steeply sloping field immediately adjacent to the eastern edge of the village of Beacons Bottom outside the settlement boundary. The site is in both the green belt and the AONB. For the reasons I have stated at section 3.2.8, I consider that the site should not be removed from the green belt as it serves important green belt functions, and there is no necessity for the allocation of additional housing sites. There has not been a recommendation in the Structure Plan to alter the green belt boundaries in this location and I consider that no exceptional circumstances, such as the national need for development, exist to justify the removal of the site from the green belt.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- GB/2/46 No modification

GB2: LAND EAST OF THE LANE, STOKENCHURCH

The Objections

1006/1 Mr D J Giles

Summary of Objections

- (a) Site should be taken out of the Green Belt.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.2.62 I have dealt with this objection in combination with objection 1006/2 discussed in section 9.1 above.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- GB/2/46 No modification

GB2: LAND BETWEEN M40-B482 AT STOKENCHURCH

The Objections

0842/1 Mr P Langston

Summary of Objections

(a) Site should be removed from the Green Belt.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.2.63 The site consists of a long (approximately 5 km), narrow strip of land between the M40 and the B482 running from the western end of Lane End to the east of Stokenchurch . The site is located in the green belt and the AONB and is largely outside any recognised settlement boundary. A key facet of the green belt is its permanence; PPG2 states that its boundaries should not be changed unless alterations to the Structure Plan have been approved or other exceptional circumstances exist. In this case the site continues to meet several green belt functions. It prevents the spread of the western side of Lane End, the merger of Lane End with Bolter End and on a larger scale the merger of Lane End with Stokenchurch. It protects the countryside from encroachment to the west of Lane End and south of the M40. And the green belt designation encourages the development of urban land elsewhere.

9.2.64 The B482 has been designated as the green belt boundary since 1972 and forms a robust and logical boundary for the green belt. Although sandwiched between the B482 and the motorway, this section of land has a largely open aspect and an extension of the western edge of High Wycombe would introduce an intrusive ribbon of development into the open countryside. This is also particularly significant given the location of the site in the AONB. Including land within the green belt limits the range of development that would be considered appropriate, as set out in PPG 2. I do not consider the restrictions on largely urban forms of development could be considered to blight the land, as appropriate countryside development would still be acceptable.

9.2.65 In sections 3.2 and 9.1 of this report I conclude that there are still substantial areas of safeguarded land in High Wycombe, which is identified in Policy H2 of the Structure Plan as a location for major housing development. The objection site is not in a more sustainable position than these already identified ASLs. These sites are sufficient to meets the needs of High Wycombe certainly for the period of this development plan and for the foreseeable future thereafter and the allocation of additional safeguarded land is unnecessary. Therefore I consider that no exceptional circumstances, such as the national need for development, exist to justify its removal from the green belt. As there has not been a recommendation in the Structure Plan to alter the green belt boundaries in this location, I can see no good reason to justify the removal of the site from the green belt.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- GB/2/47 No modification

GB3: DEVELOPMENT ADJOINING THE GREEN BELT

The Objections

0158/56 The High Wycombe and Marlow Green Party
0526/1 Chepping Wycombe Parish Council
1006/7 Mr D J Giles

Summary of Objections

- (a) Query scores given to GB3 in the Policy Impact Matrix.
- (b) Development at Ashwells, Pimms Close, Abbey Barn North and Abbey Barn South should be made to comply with this policy. The Safeguarded Land at Gomm Valley – safeguarded land should also be subject to GB3.
- (c) Policy should be recast in positive terms.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.3.1 I note that the Council have explained that Policy GB3 has a negative score under the Housing and Economy criteria because of the restrictive nature of this green belt Policy. In order to comply with the advice set out in PPG 3, green belt policies have to be restrictive and I consider that this explanation seems logical.

9.3.2 As regards issue (b), for the reasons that I set out in section 3.2, I have recommended that these sites remain as safeguarded land. In the future, as they are adjacent to the green belt, if these sites are developed, they will be subject to the conditions of Policy GB3. However it would not be reasonable to apply this Policy to land adjacent to safeguarded land as this land is not adjacent to the green belt. Safeguarded land may be suitable for appropriate development at some stage in the future and is not intended to meet the functions and objectives of land designated in the green belt.

9.3.3 As regards the wording of the policy, I have already explained above that green belt policies have to be restrictive in order to comply with government planning guidance. Whilst where possible Plan Policies should be positively worded, in this instance to do this would lessen the effectiveness of a Policy that is by necessity restrictive.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- GB/3/1 No modification

GB4: BUILT-UP AREAS WITHIN THE GREEN BELT

The Objections

0265/1 J Walker
0553/1 Norman Leiserach
0554/1 Frances Leiserach
0572/1 Fairview New Homes Plc
1260/9 The Marlow Society
1279/3 Mr David Coe
1281/3 Great Marlow Parish Council

PIC 9/4 Objections

1279/8 Mr David Coe
1281/7 Great Marlow Parish Council

Summary of Objections

- (a) GB4 is too restrictive. Definition of 'very limited infilling' (in criterion iii) should be relaxed.
- (b) GB4 (iii) appears to allow more latitude within the Green Belt than outside it (cf. Policy C11). This apparent imbalance should be redressed.
- (c) Policy effectively precludes windfall urban renewal sites in settlements washed over by the Green Belt. Flexibility needs to be introduced to ensure opportunities for recycling land are not prejudiced.
- (d) Extensions to dwellings in built-up areas within the Green Belt should not be subject to H18, but to the more stringent GB5 and GB6 Policies.
- (e) PIC objections: delete 'extensions to dwellings and' in paragraph 9.17. Replace reference to 'H18' in 9.17 and GB4 (iv) with 'GB6'.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.4.1 PPG 2 sets out a series of options for dealing with development in existing villages within the green belt, one of which allows for limited infilling in identified villages. More substantial development can take place in other villages that have been inset from the green belt. As it is clear from Para 2.11 of PPG 2 that development can take place in identified villages provided that this does not have an adverse effect on the character of the village or the openness of the green belt, the definition of what constitutes suitable development, including limited infilling, would therefore by necessity be quite restrictive. This is reflected in Policy GB 4 which allows appropriate development for suitable development, including limited infilling where appropriate whilst maintaining village character and the openness of the green belt and I do not consider these requirements to be overly restrictive.

9.4.2 Policy C11 concerns development in a wide range of settlements in the open countryside outside the green belt. Given government policy on development in the open countryside and the green belt, both policies are necessarily restrictive, but I consider different circumstances apply to identified settlements in the green belt and settlements that have not been specifically identified by the Plan in the open countryside. As both Policies comply with relevant national planning guidance, I find that comparing the relative strength of these policies is not helpful.

9.4.3 Policy GB4 does not preclude windfall urban renewal sites in washed over settlements. It must be remembered that national planning guidance in PPG 3 considers that windfall only refers to previously developed land. GB4, together with Policy GB7, is sufficiently flexible to allow for the recycling of small areas of previously developed land providing the character of the village and the openness of the green belt is maintained, which accords with PPG2. The identification and development of more substantial previously developed sites is dealt with by Policy GB 8.

9.4.4 I will address issues (d) & (e) together for convenience. PPG 2 clearly identifies a different policy context for settlements suitable for infilling within the green belt and settlements and dwellings that are not suitable for infilling, which has been reflected in Policy GB4. Given this less restrictive policy context in identified settlements, it is logically consistent that the Policy does not apply the more rigorous context of GB6 to extensions. Therefore I consider that amendment of the Policy is unnecessary, as Policy H18 would adequately protect the character of identified settlements in the green belt and thus accords with PPG 2.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- GB/4/1 Modify the Plan in accordance with PIC 9/4

GB4: CHINNOR ROAD, BLEDLOW RIDGE

The Objections

2039/3 Project Planning Associates Ltd

Summary of Objections

(a) Include the remainder of Bledlow Ridge within the boundary of the built-up area.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.4.5 The objector suggests that a roughly rectangular parcel of land south of the Chinnor Road in Bledlow Ridge be included in the settlement boundary. The site lies within the green belt and the AONB. Bledlow Ridge is a built up area designated under Policy GB4 on the proposals map. The current development boundary surrounds a dense core of housing to the north of the Chinnor Road. The site consists of a ribbon of less dense, mainly detached housing on relatively large plots, together with some village shops and services. Chinnor Road provides both a physical and visual boundary between the two areas. I consider that the green belt south of Bledlow Ridge serves the important green belt functions of restricting the growth of High Wycombe, preventing encroachment into the open countryside and encouraging the development of urban land. Although fairly well screened from the southern side, this objection site has a significantly more open character than the more densely developed land to the north. Limited infilling as permitted by Policy GB4 would significantly reduce the openness of the green belt in this location. As this loss of openness would be contrary to green belt objectives, I find that the settlement boundary should not be amended. Not including this land within the settlement boundary would not fundamentally restrict the development of the village to the extent that it would have a detrimental effect on local services.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- GB/4/2 No modification

GB4: GRACE COTTAGE, CHURCH LANE, LACEY GREEN

The Objections

0970/1 Sarah Morgan

Summary of Objections

(a) Site should be included within the settlement boundary.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.4.6 The site comprises a triangular small field to west of Lacey Green adjacent to both the village's settlement boundary and Conservation Area. The site is located within the green belt and AONB. Lacey Green is a built up area designated under Policy GB4 as being suitable for limited infilling. The settlement boundary currently runs along Church Lane to the east of the site, which I consider forms a strongly defensible boundary. For the reasons I have stated at section 3.2.7, I consider the site serves important green belt functions. Extending the settlement boundary over this road would have the effect of introducing infill development into part of the green belt that is largely open in nature. I find that this loss of openness would be contrary to green belt objectives and that the settlement boundary should not be amended.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- GB/4/3 No modification

GB4: WHITELEAF (AS153)

The Objections

0643/1 Mrs Maggie Wooster

Summary of Objections

- (a) Whiteleaf should be included as a 'built-up area within the Green Belt': add it as (xii) to the list in paragraph 9.15.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.4.7 The site consists of an irregularly shaped parcel of land in the village of Whiteleaf to the east of Princes Risborough. The site is in the green belt and AONB and is outside any recognised settlement boundary. Whiteleaf is not designated as a built up area to which policy GB4 applies.

9.4.8 Whiteleaf is a long dispersed ribbon of development mostly on Upper Icknield Way. The area has a largely open appearance, with most buildings consisting of detached properties on relatively large plots blending in well with the surrounding attractive open countryside. The dwellings are separated from the more urban form of Monks Risborough to the west and do not have the dense nucleated form of other built up areas designated under Policy GB4. Whilst I accept that some individual houses are quite prominent in the landscape, they are sufficiently dispersed not to give an overall impression of density. The green belt in this location performs the important functions of reducing the spread of Princes Risborough, preventing encroachment into the open countryside and encouraging the development of urban land. The limited infilling that would be permissible under GB4 would reduce the openness of the green belt in this location and would compromise important green belt objectives. I can therefore see no justification for designating the village under Policy GB4. As regards the site itself, I consider that this parcel of open land contributes to the green belt functions listed above and to allow development on this site would have a detrimental effect on the openness of the green belt in this location.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- GB/4/4 No modification

GB4: HUGHENDEN PUMPING STATION

The Objections

0703/1 Three Valleys Water

Summary of Objections

(a) Site should be included within the Hughenden Valley settlement boundary.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.4.9 The site consists of a roughly square parcel of land, immediately to the south of Hughenden. The site is in both the green belt and the AONB. Hughenden is a built up area designated under Policy GB4 as being suitable for limited infilling.

9.4.10 The development boundary of Hughenden Valley is located directly to the north of the site and contains the dense, semi-urban built up area of Hughenden Valley. The boundary is defined to the north of the site by the southern boundaries of the gardens of homes in the settlement. Although the site has been built on, this is an isolated building in a large plot that is visually very different from the houses to the north and has more in common with the open countryside between Hughenden and High Wycombe. Whilst the Community Health Centre on the opposite side of the road is currently outside the settlement boundary, I do not find that its presence reduces the appearance of the pumping station as an isolated building.

9.4.11 The green belt south of Hughenden Valley serves the important green belt functions preventing the merging of High Wycombe and Hughenden Valley, preventing encroachment into the open countryside and encouraging the development of urban land. Extending the settlement boundary introduces the possibility of infill development into part of the green belt that is largely open in nature. As this loss of openness would be contrary to green belt objectives, the settlement boundary should not be amended. Whilst the operational requirements of the pumping station may require expansion in the future, I do not consider that this could be considered as sufficient justification for changing this boundary. Any proposals would have to be considered on their own merits in the context of green belt policy at that time.

RECOMMENDATIONS

GB/4/5 No modification

GB4: SPINFIELD LANE, BOVINGDON GREEN

The Objections

0731/1 Mr R Rockell
1255/1 Mr P Allen

Summary of Objections

(a) Site should be included within the settlement boundary of Bovington Green.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.4.12 I have dealt with a related objection concerning a proposal for housing allocation of the site in section 3.2.6. Bovingdon Green is a small, distinct, outlying group of dwellings about 1.5 km north-west of Marlow town centre. The objection site is a small parcel of land comprising a bungalow known as 'Acres View' and its garden, together with an adjoining strip of grassland. I consider the site plays a particularly important role in the green belt function of maintaining the vulnerable gap that separates Bovingdon Green from Marlow. Any additional building on the site would not be infilling, but would extend the settlement. To include the site within the GB4 boundary could lead to pressure for another dwelling to the south-east, which would encroach into this attractive countryside gap. The resulting loss of openness would be contrary to green belt objectives and would adversely affect the rural character of the area. PPG2 stresses the importance of permanent boundaries for the green belt. I consider therefore that there are no exceptional circumstances in this case to justify including the site within the GB4 area and that the policy context for land should remain unchanged.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- GB/4/6 No modification

GB4: PARTRIDGE LODGE & KEEPERS, BOVINGDON GREEN

The Objections

0277/4	Graham Parcell
1997/1	Mr & Mrs Michael Brown

Summary of Objections

- (a) Partridge Lodge and Keepers should be included within the Bovingdon Green settlement boundary.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.4.13 The site comprises a small parcel of land of similar density and character to the pattern of development within the GB4 boundary, which it adjoins. The Council agrees to the very minor modification to the policy area boundary proposed by the objectors, which I consider would form a logical and defensible boundary to the area.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- GB/4/6 Modify the Plan in accordance with PICs 9/4 and M/49

GB5: REPLACEMENT DWELLINGS IN THE GREEN BELT
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The Objections

0072/1	Boyer Planning Ltd
0366/2	Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead – Planning Policy Unit
0415/1	Mrs Clare Thrush

0421/1	Mr Giles Thrush
0821/2	James Michael Campbell
1024/1	Michael Tebbot, Tebbot & Wells Ltd
1075/1	<i>Little Marlow Parish Council</i>
1279/1	<i>Mr David Coe</i>
1281/1	<i>Great Marlow Parish Council</i>
1595/1	Berkeley Homes (Chiltern) Ltd
1935/1	<i>Councillor Anthea Hardy</i>
2039/1	<i>Project Planning Associates Ltd</i>
2074/1	<i>Debra Jackson</i>

PIC 9/5 Objections

1279/9	Mr David Coe
1281/8	Great Marlow Parish Council
2039/4	Project Planning Associates Ltd

Summary of Objections

- (a) Policy and accompanying text should be framed in the positive rather than in the negative to accord with PPG2 and paragraph 9.19. Needs an explanation of what constitutes an 'inappropriately large' dwelling. Non-integral outbuildings should be considered in the floorspace calculations.
- (b) Policy is too prescriptive. Replacement dwellings need not be inappropriate development, but should not result in materially larger dwellings. Floorspace should only be one of the guiding factors in determining whether a proposal is materially larger.
- (c) 50% rule places an arbitrary restriction on development that may be totally inappropriate and inequitable. Relaxation of 50% rule in ribbons of development should not be dependent upon definition of that ribbon.
- (d) 50% rule should be reconsidered/removed. Conversely the calculation of suitability should remain based on arithmetic grounds and no subjectivity should be involved.
- (e) Need to relook at definition of 'original dwelling'.
- (f) PIC objections:
 - objections to the detailed wording of the policy.
 - the caveat that replacement dwellings should not appear to be disproportionately large relative to the original dwelling is neither necessary nor reasonable.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.5.1 As regards the objector's concerns whether the policy should be positively worded, I consider that green belt policies have to be restrictive in order to comply with national planning guidance. Although suitable replacement dwellings are recognised as appropriate development by PPG 2, the Policy has to have a restrictive nature in order to protect the openness of the green belt from intrusive replacement dwellings. Whilst Plan policies should be positively worded wherever possible, in this instance to do this would lessen the effectiveness of a Policy that is by necessity restrictive. I note that PIC 9/5 removes the term "inappropriately large" and replaces it with the term "disproportionately large" which I consider to be clearer. Similarly I find that this PIC clarifies how outbuildings would be taken into consideration and I believe this change meets the objector's concerns regarding these two matters.

9.5.2 For reasons of brevity I will address matters (b), (c) and (d) together. I recognise that suitable replacement dwellings are recognised as appropriate development by PPG 2, but it is reasonable that the Policy has a restrictive nature in order to protect the openness of the green belt, which PPG2 states is its most important attribute. The approach taken by the Council in basing their assessment of the suitability of a new dwelling on floorspace is acceptable as this measure would give a reasonable indication of the effect of proposals on the openness of the green belt. There is a requirement in PPG 2 that new dwellings should not be materially larger than those they replace and I find the use of a 50% rule provides an easily understood benchmark on which decisions can be based. To base an assessment of suitability on a more subjective landscape approach may not afford the rigorous protection of openness that is required by national planning guidance. PIC 9/5 introduces a further degree of flexibility into this assessment that goes some way to meeting objectors concerns, particularly in terms of ribbons of development, very large or very small dwellings, which I consider is reasonable. However to increase this degree of flexibility further might allow development that affected the open nature of the green belt and undermined the purpose of this Policy. Conversely a purely arithmetic assessment of suitability would, in certain cases, provide an unnecessarily rigid test that would not give any real benefit to the protection to the green belt.

9.5.3 As regards objectors concerns over the use of the term original dwelling, the term is defined in the General Permitted Development Order, which I have no remit to alter. I consider that it is reasonable that the Council use this term as this specifically referred to in PPG2 at paragraph 3.6. The suggested PICs do however increase the flexibility and equity of this policy and I consider that this goes some way to meeting objectors concerns.

9.5.4 As regards objector's concerns about the wording of PIC 9/5, I consider that the policy is satisfactorily worded. To add the phrase "total floorspace" after 120 square metres would change the meaning of the Policy so as to make it unduly restrictive. Similarly I consider that it would be unnecessary to add the phrase "or plot size", as to determine the suitability of a replacement dwelling based on plot size would be contrary to PPG2 that clearly states that assessments of the suitability of any replacement dwelling should be based on the size of the dwelling. Furthermore I consider that the objector's suggested deletion of the phrase "satisfactorily designed" and its replacement with the phrase "satisfactorily and sufficient" introduces an unnecessary degree of ambiguity into the policy.

9.5.5 As I have already explained above, I find PIC 9/5 acceptable. As regards changing the wording of the final paragraph to refer to dwellings that are disproportionately large, there is a requirement found in PPG 2 that new dwellings should not be materially larger than those they replace. This wording adequately reflects this requirement and should not be deleted.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- GB/5/1 Modify the Plan in accordance with PIC 9/5

GB6: EXTENSIONS TO DWELLINGS IN THE GREEN BELT

The Objections

0366/3	Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead –Planning Policy Unit
0821/3	James Michael Campbell
0913/1	Mrs Jean Gabbitas
1024/2	Michael Tebbot, Tebbot & Wells Ltd
1075/2	Little Marlow Parish Council

1279/2	Mr David Coe
1281/2	Great Marlow Parish Council
1595/2	Berkeley Homes (Chiltern) Ltd
1681/1	Cllr Mrs P Priestly
1935/2	Cllr Anthea Hardy
2039/2	Project Planning Associates Ltd

PIC 9/6 Objections

1218/17	R J Newell
1279/10	Mr David Coe
1281/9	Great Marlow Parish Council
2039/5	Project Planning Associates Ltd

Summary of Objections

- (a) Policy is too prescriptive. Extensions need not be inappropriate development. Floorspace should only be one of the guiding factors in determining whether an extension is disproportionate.
- (b) The 50% rule should be reconsidered:
- biased against smaller dwellings
 - would allow greater flexibility in assessing all pertinent factors
 - extensions should be judged against their impact on the landscape/open character of the Green Belt
 - application of the 50% rule outside ribbons of development is inequitable
- (c) No need for criterion (ii) in light of policy's final paragraph.
- (d) Reconsider term 'dwelling'.
- (e) Objection to proposed maximum figure of 120sqm in PIC 9/6.
- (f) Substitute 'satisfactory and sufficient' for 'satisfactorily designed' in GB6 (b) (PIC 9/6). The caveat that extensions should not appear to be disproportionately large relative to the original/existing dwelling is neither necessary nor reasonable.
- (g) The caveat that extensions should not appear to be disproportionately large relative to the original dwelling in PIC 9/6 is neither necessary nor reasonable

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.6.1 For brevity I will deal with issues (a) and (b) together. I do not consider that the Policy is overly prescriptive. I recognise that suitable extensions are recognised as appropriate development by PPG2, but it is reasonable that the Policy has a restrictive nature in order to protect the openness of the green belt. The approach taken by the Council in basing their assessment of the suitability of a new dwelling on floorspace is reasonable, as this measure would relate strongly to the effects on the openness of the green belt, which is its most important attribute. PPG2 requires that extensions to buildings in the green belt should not result in disproportionate additions to buildings. I consider the use of a 50% rule provides an easily understood benchmark on which decisions can be based. To base an assessment of suitability on a more subjective landscape approach may not afford the rigorous protection of openness that is required by national planning guidance.

9.6.2 PIC 9/6 introduces a further degree of flexibility into this assessment that goes some way to meeting objectors' concerns, particularly with regard to very large or small buildings.

Similarly PIC9/5 clarifies how outbuildings would be taken into consideration, which also goes some way to meeting objectors' concerns regarding this matter. However, I consider that increasing this degree of flexibility further might allow development that affected the open nature of the green belt and undermine the purpose of this policy. Conversely a purely arithmetic assessment of suitability would, in certain cases, provide an unnecessarily rigid test that would not give any real benefit to the protection of the green belt. Similarly I consider that it would be unnecessary to add the phrase "or plot size". To determine the suitability of a replacement dwelling based solely on plot size would be contrary to the spirit of policy in PPG2, which clearly states that assessments of the suitability of any extension should be based on the size of the original dwelling. As regards the potential difference in the application of the 50% rule to extensions inside or outside ribbons of development, I accept that this may initially appear to be somewhat inequitable. However extensions in groups of dwellings are likely to have less impact on the green belt in landscape terms.

9.6.3 Although I accept that the final paragraph of the policy would also probably restrict the creation of extensions that were dwellings in their own right, I consider that Criterion (iii), should remain in the Plan as it provides unequivocal guidance on this matter. Turning to issue (d) I do note that the term dwelling has been replaced by the term building, which I consider satisfies the objector's concern regarding this issue.

9.6.4 I consider that the use of a maximum figure of 120 square metres is acceptable as it helps to protect the green belt from disproportionately large extensions. The most important attribute of the green belt is its openness, and unnecessarily large extensions would reduce this. PIC 5/6 introduces a degree of flexibility into the policy which I consider allows for the particular circumstances of very large or small dwellings to be taken into account. As regards issue (f), I consider that the objector's suggested deletion of the phrase "satisfactorily designed" and its replacement with the phrase "satisfactorily and sufficient" introduces an unnecessary degree of ambiguity into the Policy that should not be made.

9.6.5 Turning to issue (g), I find PIC 9/6 acceptable as regards changing the wording of the final paragraph to refer to extensions that are disproportionately large. This wording adequately reflects the requirement in PPG2 that new extensions to buildings in the green belt should not result in disproportionate additions to buildings and should not be deleted.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- GB/6/1 Modify the Plan in accordance with PIC 9/6

GB6: MUNDAYDEAN LANE, MARLOW

The Objections

1600/1 David J Rogers

Summary of Objections

- (a) Should be greater flexibility applied in relation to 50% rule where original property is very small, and particularly on large plots.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.6.6 For the reasons given above I consider that Policy GB6, following PIC 9/6 is acceptable. I consider that the suitability of extensions on individual plots could be adequately assessed by

this Policy and following PIC 9/6 the Policy allows for the particular circumstances of small dwellings in the green belt to be taken into account. It would however involve the Plan in an unnecessary level of detail to make recommendations as to the suitability of particular extensions to dwellings and there is no specific need to address this issue in the Policy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- GB/6/2 No modification

GB6A: DETACHED OUTBUILDINGS

PIC 9/7 Objections

1279/11	Mr David Coe
1281/10	Great Marlow Parish Council
1739/7	Lord Carrington's Grandchildren's Settlement
2063/13	Wycombe Summit Ltd/Wycombe Option Ltd

Summary of Objections

- (a) Add 'or plot size' after 'original dwelling'.
- (b) Outbuildings can assist in re-use of existing structures in the Green Belt, and the policy should therefore be flexible enough to allow for this.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.6.7 I consider that it would be unnecessary to add the phrase "or plot size", because to determine the suitability of an extension to a building based on plot size would be contrary to PPG2. That clearly states that assessments of the suitability of extensions should be based on the size of the dwelling. As regards the beneficial effects of the re-use of existing structures in the green belt, it should be remembered that this policy applies solely to residential development and the reuse of buildings for other purposes, such as hotel use, is addressed by Policy GB7. I consider that the Plan's green belt Policies are sufficiently flexible to take any relevant considerations into account, and there is no specific need to address this issue in the Policy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- GB/6/3 Modify the Plan in accordance with PIC 9/7

GB7: RE-USE AND ADAPTATION OF BUILDINGS IN THE GREEN BELT
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PIC 9/8 Objections

0428/4	Bible Lands
0524/34	Thames Valley Chamber

1218/23 R J Newell
1739/8 Lord Carrington's Grandchildren's Settlement
2063/14 Wycombe Summit/Wycombe Options Ltd

Summary of Objections

- (a) The changes clearly intend to stop any extension to a converted building in the Green Belt. This could restrict the ability to convert redundant buildings. The text should be reinstated.
- (b) Deletion of the wording in Policy GB7 is considered inappropriate and unduly restrictive in seeking to find a beneficial use for land that falls within Green Belt.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.7.1 For reasons of brevity I will deal with both issues (a) & (b) together as they are concerned with similar matters. Whilst PIC 9/8 effectively removed the scope for any extensions to buildings being reused in the green belt, this change has been superseded by PIC 9/11 which allows for extensions in the green belt, subject to certain criteria. I consider that PC 9/8 was unduly inflexible and that this later proposed change more correctly reflects national planning guidance and objectors' concerns regarding the policy wording and the status of extensions as appropriate development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Modify the Plan in accordance with PIC 9/11 but not PIC 9/8

GB8: MAJOR DEVELOPED SITES WITHIN THE GREEN BELT

The Objections

1293/1 Naphill & Walter's Ash Residents Association
1293/21 Naphill & Walter's Ash Residents Association
1475/1 Mr D V Baker

Summary of Objections

- (a) Should reference be made to site specific development briefs
- (b) Criterion 1 does not accord with PPG 2
- (c) Criterion a is ambiguous
- (d) Criterion f is contrary to PPG 13 and the aims of SERPLAN Strategy as it could lead to a massive increase in employment.
- (e) An additional criterion cross-referencing to GB2 should be introduced.
- (f) Boundary lines for major development sites should be correctly and tightly drawn.
- (g) There should be an apostrophe in Walter's Ash.
- (h) AONB and Green Belt policies should be in the same section. This would help to strengthen the case for controlling development already in these areas, and particularly major developed sites such as RAF High Wycombe which hide behind Circular 18/84.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.8.1 PPG2 states that major developed sites within the green belt should be identified in local plans to allow both infilling or acceptable redevelopment and that in the case of redevelopment the Council should consider producing briefs for these sites. The Policy has identified major developed sites, which are suitable for infilling or some form of redevelopment. The suggested amendment to the first paragraph of the supporting text by the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead would require the Council to produce site specific policies for all these sites, which total 11 in number. PPG12 warns against the use of too many site-specific policies in a Plan and I consider that this amendment would be inappropriate as it would involve the Plan in excessive detail and could lead to unacceptable inflexibility. I appreciate that the Council's approach concerning major developed sites in the green belt differs from that of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead. However, but there is nothing in the Council's approach that does not broadly accord with national planning guidance and the policy does not preclude the use of site specific briefs, where these are considered appropriate. I note that the Wycombe Airpark site merits a specific policy in the Plan. Conversely I note that another objector has questioned if the Council are reasonable in asking for a comprehensive long-term plan to be produced for an entire site as part of any redevelopment proposals. As this approach is supported by paragraph C7 of Annex C of PPG2, and refers to both full and partial redevelopment, I consider that this requirement is perfectly reasonable.

9.8.2 Annex C of PPG2 states that the impact of redevelopment should not exceed the current impact of the site on the green belt. It is clear from the supporting text to the Policy that the Council will seek to reduce the impact of major developed sites on the green belt where this is possible. Criterion (i) of the Policy complies with the requirements of PPG2 and the introduction of the suggested wording to the criterion would be unnecessary. I consider that Criterion (a) is clear and unambiguous. There is no necessity to add the suggested wording as the concerns of the objector regarding traffic generation are adequately addressed by the Plan's Transport Policies.

9.8.3 As regards the objector's concerns over Criterion (f), the retention of employment uses within the green belt would not be contrary to advice in PPG2. Similarly the aim of the criterion reasonably reflects Policy E5 of the Structure Plan, which supports the protection of current employment uses in an environmentally constrained area. I have seen no evidence to support the suggestion that this Policy would lead to increased employment use. Whilst the creation of new net employment generating uses in inaccessible locations would clearly be contrary to both PPG13 and SERPLAN advice, these concerns could be adequately addressed by the Plan's Policies on the location of employment generating development. As regards the suggestion that a cross reference to GB2 should be added as an additional criterion, I do not consider this is necessary as the Plan should be read as a whole document.

9.8.4 Turning to issue (f), I note that the boundary lines on the proposals map do include land outside the developed area of these sites. However the policy is clear in stating the restrictions on the redevelopment of sites in green belts and that no additional impact will be permitted to the green belt. Therefore I can see no necessity to redraw these boundaries more tightly; development detrimental to the overall openness of the site would not be permitted by the policy.

9.8.5 I note that the objector's concerns regarding issue (g) has been addressed by PIC 9/9. As regards issue (h), I do not consider that green belt policies and AONB policies should be in the same section, as each type of Policy has a fundamentally different objective. Green belts are primarily concerned with keeping land open, as opposed to the landscape and nature conservation objectives of AONB. Furthermore within green belts there is the unique presumption against inappropriate development. I consider that it would be confusing to place both policies in the same chapter, and I find that the order of the Plan is clear and understandable.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- GB/8/1 Modify the Plan in accordance with PIC 9/9

GB8: GRANGE FARM, SAUNDERTON

The Objections

0356/2 *Hearing Dogs for Deaf People*

Summary of Objections

- (a) Site should be classified as a Major Developed Site within the Green Belt.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.8.6 PPG 2 offers no specific guidance as to what constitutes a major developed site within the green belt. Clearly there is a need for such sites to be substantial, and some of the types of use site that would be considered as major developed sites are listed. The Council have based their assessment of what constitutes a major developed site on a number of criteria, including the size of the site, extent and presence of development, employment activity and use. I acknowledge that the Council state that permission was granted for the change of use of the former agricultural buildings on the site to an office and training centre for hearing dogs, but I consider that this site falls outside the criteria set out in this topic paper. I note that this objection has been conditionally withdrawn.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- GB/8/2 No modification

GB8: WEST'S YARD, SAUNDERTON

The Objections

0699/1 The Frank West Trust

Summary of Objections

- (a) Site should be identified as a Major Developed Site.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.8.7 The site comprises a former timber yard of about 1.65 ha, located to the south of Slough Lane, Saunderton, within the green belt. The site is now occupied by a range of businesses occupying a variety of premises and open yards. The objectors seek the designation of the site as a MDS, to allow for potential infill development to improve the site and facilitate the provision of a park and ride facility. I deal with an objection regarding a housing proposal in section 3.2.7 of my report. A further objection to the proposal as a park and ride site was conditionally withdrawn following the deletion of specific P&R sites from the Deposit Plan; however, at the inquiry the objector indicated a change of view about this possibility, in conjunction with

employment development infill.

9.8.8 At present the policy context for the site is provided by Policy GB2 of the plan, which reflects the presumption against development (apart from limited categories) in the green belt except in very special circumstances, and Policy GB7 which allows the re-use of rural buildings subject to a number of criteria. The objectors argued that allocation of the site as a MDS would comply with the purpose of such sites, in that limited infill would promote economic activity without encroaching on the green belt or affecting its main purpose. It would also enable some environmental enhancement of the site.

9.8.9 The criteria for MDS appraisals are set out in Topic Paper 7, which is available to the public but not subject to participation. The Council argued that the criteria followed closely guidance of PPG2, for example with regard to the type of uses that might be considered. A key area of dispute was the criterion specifying a minimum size of 2 ha. PPG2 does not put forward any guidance on the issue of what constitutes 'major', which could be interpreted as indicating that local circumstances should guide the threshold. The Council referred to a study published by Oxford Brookes University, which showed a range of practice by different LPAs, with most adopting a minimum of 2 ha or more. Clearly the site falls below the Council's adopted threshold.

9.8.10 In this case a large proportion of the site was covered by either buildings or 'development' in the planning sense of uses such as open storage of building materials, vehicles etc that would normally require planning permission if site on land with no such previous use. As such the buildings and uses dominate the site, which has tightly drawn boundaries. The site provides valuable local employment for up to 70 persons but could not be described as being of special importance to the District or region.

9.8.11 The form and 'presence' of development on the site was more contentious. Most of the buildings are single storey, and of basic quality in terms of construction and facilities, as the objectors admitted. The ratio of buildings to open and storage land is low. I consider they do not create an established major presence. The objectors compared the level of development on the site with that at Binder's yard, which has been designated as a MDS. I saw the similarities between the sites, noting that Binders yard is larger and has a couple of two storey buildings, but less site cover. It is not for me to comment on the validity of the MDS notation at Binder's yard since that site is not subject to objection. Whatever the distinction the Council drew, I consider that it was correct to exclude Wests yard, primarily because of its small size and lack of substantial buildings.

9.8.12 I note that the criteria for MDS designation make no reference to P&R sites. PPG13 provides for such schemes in the green belt subject to certain safeguards but the potential suitability for this use if it is required at some future date does not warrant breaching the normal considerations of green belt policy with regard to MDSs.

9.8.13 While some redevelopment may well secure an improvement in the untidy appearance of the site, that in itself is not sufficient to justify designation as a MDS. Any redevelopment proposal would have to be considered against the policies normally applicable to employment sites in the green belt. Policy E5 is generally permissive of development for employment uses on scattered employment sites such as this, subject to compatibility with surrounding land uses. In the case of inappropriate development, positive benefits would be weighed against any harm to the green belt to establish whether any very special circumstances exist to justify setting aside the presumption against the scheme.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- GB/8/3 No modification

GB8: LITTLE MARLOW SEWAGE WORKS

The Objections

0366/5 Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead (RBWM)– Planning Policy Unit

Summary of Objections

- (a) Policy needs reference to preparation of site briefs; criterion (i) not in accordance with PPG2; criterion (a) is ambiguous; criterion (f) should be deleted and additional criterion required to ensure no conflict with GB2 or other Plan policies.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.8.14 . For the reasons I have given in dealing with general objections to Policy GB8, I do not consider that the wording of the Policy should be amended. In particular I consider that there is no necessity to include site-specific briefs for all identified major developed sites. The stance of the policy regarding the protection of employment land is acceptable both in terms of local and national planning guidance regarding the preservation of the green belt and the location of employment generating land uses.

9.8.15 I now turn to the site-specific issues raised by the objector. The site is located to the south of Little Marlow village and is in the green belt and the Thames floodplain. It is of critical importance in securing a key element of the Plan, the redevelopment of Wycombe Marsh sewage treatment works through its relocation to Little Marlow.

9.8.16 PPG2 offers no specific guidance as to what constitutes a major developed site within the green belt, apart from describing them as substantial, although it does list some of the types of use that would normally be considered as major developed sites. These include use as a sewage treatment works. Thus the site clearly meets the first of the Council's criteria for MDS select as RBWM acknowledge.

9.8.17 The sewage works site extends to about 16 ha, well in excess of the minimum threshold specified by the Council. In the absence of any guidance in PPG2, the Council referred to a study published by Oxford Brookes University, which showed a range of practice by different LPAs, with most adopting a minimum of 2 ha or more. This site is positioned at the very top end of the range of thresholds identified in the study. In my opinion it is certainly reasonable to say that it meets requirements for a MDS on this count.

9.8.18 RBWM has suggested that the site in fact does not meet the requirement for a major developed presence, because it only contains 7400 m² of buildings. Whilst I recognise that the site contains a smaller proportion of buildings than some other major developed sites such as hospitals, the site has a developed appearance due in part to the presence of the large area of sewage treatment tanks. The composting building is a large dominant structure, prominently open to view from the hills on the other side of the Thames. On balance therefore, I consider that the nature and scale of buildings and other structures on the site meets this test.

9.8.19 A similar argument is used by the objector regarding the level and form of development on site. I consider that although the large sewage treatment tanks are low level, they are clearly visible and have a very different appearance to the surrounding open countryside. Therefore the site has a sufficiently high level and form of development, to meet the criteria concerning these matters in the Topic Paper. It does not look unusual compared with other sewage works, which are specifically mentioned in PPG2 as a potential MDS.

9.8.20 There no dispute that the other criteria set out in the Topic Paper are not met. Topic Paper 7 does not require that all selection criteria must be met and states that the acceptability of a site should be based a balanced judgement taking all relevant factors into account. I

consider that the site has met a sufficient number of these criteria, particularly regarding its use, the size of the site and nature of development, to justify its allocation as a major developed site in the Plan. Given the intended consolidation and improvement of the works associated with the relocation of the Wycombe Marsh site, I consider that a redevelopment resulting in a change of use is highly unlikely. In any event other policies in the Plan for the protection of the green belt and the location of employment generating development would ensure that an intrusive redevelopment that lead to a significant increase in car based travel would not be permitted.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- GB/8/3 No modification

GB8: WYCOMBE AIRPARK

The Objections

1703/1 Captain Tim Orchard

Summary of Objections

- (a) Concerned by detailed wording of the policy.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.8.21 Wycombe Airpark is designated as a MDS to which a special policy for the control of development, GB9 applies. I deal with objections to that policy in section 9.9 below. The objectors concern with the requirement for a long-term plan for comprehensive redevelopment of a MDS is understandable, given the rather ad hoc incremental way the Airpark has evolved. However, the policy accords fully with PPG2, which requires such sites to be considered in the round, whether or not all buildings are to be developed. This helps to ensure that the redevelopment of individual buildings does not undermine the fundamental concept that the site as a whole does not reduce the openness of the green belt.

RECOMMENDATIONS

GB8: WYCOMBE WEST SCHOOL, DOWNLEY

The Objections

1201/1 Mr C G Hamilton, Clerk to Downley Parish Council

Summary of Objections

- (a) Redevelopment of the site could have an adverse effect on the surrounding area. Any redevelopment proposals should take account of the school's facilities and ensure that they continue on the site. Removal or reduction of height of 'tower block' would benefit visual amenity.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.8.22 I recognise that the objector is not opposed in principle to the listing of Wycombe West School as a major developed site but has suggested that the criteria of the policy be amended to reflect particular concerns. These concerns relate to the visual amenity of the site, particularly in relation to the tower block, as well as associated concerns over increased traffic generation and the community use of the School's facilities. I consider that the suggested amendments to the Policy would involve the Policy in an overly high level of detail and that the Policy as currently worded provides sufficient protection for the visual amenity and openness of the site. I note that the Council considers that the objector's concerns have been addressed as part of the recent consent granted for the site.

RECOMMENDATIONS

No modification

GB9: WYCOMBE AIRPARK

The Objections

0158/57	High Wycombe and Marlow Green Party
0224/3	John Howard Spanner
1279/4	<i>Mr David Coe</i>
1279/5	Mr David Coe
1281/4	<i>Great Marlow Parish Council</i>
1281/5	Great Marlow Parish Council
1414/2	Michael Overall
1703/2	Captain Tim Orchard
1703/3	Captain Tim Orchard
2062/1	Mr M Batt

PIC 9/10 Objections

1279/12	Mr David Coe
1281/11	Great Marlow Parish Council
1703/4	Captain Tim Orchard

Summary of Objections

- Query scores given to GB9 in the Policy Impact Matrix.
- Provision should be made for a footbridge over the M40 in the position of the 'lost' road between Booker Common and the Airpark.
- Pressures to use the Airpark as a commercial facility will lead to increased flying activity and threaten training and recreational opportunities. Add 'for training or recreational purposes' at the end of the first sentence of the policy statement.
- The existing developed area should be defined on the Proposals Map.
- Wording is unduly restrictive, impracticable and, in part, unenforceable. No development is likely to be justified as 'essential'. Some limited development should be allowed to relieve pressure for development elsewhere in the District.
- The requirement that development must not give rise to increased flying activities and must be limited to aviation-related uses, is unnecessarily restrictive. Terminology used is confusing. Extensions to buildings should be detailed as permissible under GB9.

- (g) A development brief or detailed guidance should be produced for development at the Airpark and agreed between operators and the local authority.
- (h) There should be an addition to the text in recognition of the importance of the Airpark as a local facility.
- (i) The changes to GB9 (iv) in PIC 9/10 continue the tenuous link between development and increased flying activity. 'Significantly' is imprecise and should be replaced with 'capacity for'.

Inspector's Reasoning and conclusions

9.9.1 The Wycombe Airpark is a former World War Two airfield now used for commercial aviation by light aircraft, helicopters and gliders. It covers an extensive area to the south west of the M40, within the green belt and, along its northern boundary, the AONB. The site has a very long and involved planning history, involving well over 100 planning applications, several appeals and a High Court challenge that went to the Court of Appeal.

9.9.2 The planning policy context for development at the site in the Adopted Plan is provided by policy C15, which set out a number of criteria whereby development, could be assessed. Given its location within the green belt, the policy sought in particular to restrict new building and activity to that related to the use as an airfield. The proposed policy continues this approach, with some minor modifications.

9.9.3 The council argue that the policy has stood up well to sustained attack from the occupiers of the Airpark, who wish to develop activities, as opposed to nearby residents and the Council, who wish to restrict them. I note however that the inspector who determined an appeal in June 2000 concerning an extension to a hangar pointed out that the policy did not comply with paragraph C3 of PPG2, which states that LPAs may define the boundary of the present extent of development within a MDS.

9.9.4 The Council state that their approach to the site is more sophisticated than merely to allow infilling. However, the policy includes a criterion that development shall be within 'the existing developed area of the Airpark'. I find their reasons for not establishing a clear boundary on a plan unconvincing. I have seen no strong argument as to why this approach, which follows PPG2, would not help to avoid the type of disputes that have occurred in the past. From what I saw, Dr Batt's suggested boundary appears tightly drawn up to the group of existing buildings and associated hard surfaces for car parking and circulation. However, it includes buildings outside the MDS area within the green belt, where the policy does not apply, and I have not been asked to re-consider the boundary of the whole site. The 'developed area' shown would have to be amended therefore and cannot be recommended on its current alignment.

9.9.5 I do not see this as a 'de facto' relaxation of the policy, because all the provisions of Policy GB8 would continue to apply. Thus, the footprint, scale and height of new buildings should not have any greater impact on the openness of the green belt than existing development. As the Council say, the cumulative impact of all existing and proposed buildings has to be considered across the site as a whole. This does not mean that the 'developed area' boundary has to be drawn so tightly around individual buildings that no re-organisation of development can take place. However, any additional guidance in the form of a development brief appears unnecessary at this stage in the development of the site and could encourage undesired increases in development and consequent activity.

9.9.6 Turning to the criteria themselves, I see no objection to including helicopters in criterion (i) but otherwise consider that this states clearly a specific type of development that may be allowed. I consider criterion (ii), which provides for ancillary activities that may possibly include training, meets the overriding policy objective to prevent a major expansion of activity in the green belt and is not unduly restrictive. The issue of extensions would be partly addressed by

Policy GB8, although GB9 would be relevant to their use. I have some concerns about the precision of criterion (iv) which leaves considerable scope for argument, based on past experience. However, the broad thrust of the intention to prevent substantial increases in activity at the site accords with PPG2 and it would be for developers to produce evidence to support any claim that this leg of the policy would not be breached. I accept that there is a link between hangar capacity at the airport and the number of potential flights; this factor would be taken into account with any other relevant information in the determination of any planning application or appeal.

9.9.7 The role of the Airpark is evident to its users and need no reference in the supporting text of the plan. The objection concerning the sustainability appraisal appears historic and seeks no change to the plan. The policy seeks only to control development within the site; I agree with the Council that provision of major infrastructure such as a footbridge over the M40 would be an unnecessarily onerous requirement on any new Airpark development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- GB/9/1 Modify the Plan in accordance with PIC9/10
- GB/9/2 Prepare a plan appended to the policy that shows the 'developed area' boundary to which criterion (iii) applies, based on the objector's plan D.C.A.P. but excluding any areas outside the MDS area