

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK (NPPF) & GREEN BELT

Local and National Green Belt Policies

The Hoylake Golf Resort site lies entirely within land designated as Green Belt.

Current local and national policies provide guidelines on development within the Green Belt (see below HoC briefing paper).

Local policy is currently still covered by Wirral's Unitary Development Plan, though this plan is due to be replaced.

Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. Its aim is to prevent urban sprawl; essential characteristics of Green Belt is openness and permanence.

Green Belt serves five purposes:

- to check unrestricted sprawl of built-up areas;
- to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns;
- to encourage the reuse of derelict land.

Local planning authorities should enhance the beneficial use of Green Belt by providing access; opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation; retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity; improve damaged land.

Local planning authorities should establish Green Belt boundaries in their Local Plans to set the framework for Green Belt and

settlement
policy. Green Belt boundaries should be altered only in
exceptional
circumstances. Authorities should consider Green Belt
boundaries with
regard to the long term, beyond the plan period.

Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to
the Green Belt
and should not be approved except in very special
circumstances.

Local planning authorities should ensure weight is given
to harm to
Green Belt. 'Very special circumstances' can stand only if
inappropriateness is outweighed by other considerations.

Exceptions to inappropriate new buildings in Green Belt
are:

- buildings for agriculture and forestry;
- provision of appropriate facilities for outdoor sport and recreation, as long as openness of Green Belt preserved, no conflict with the purposes of including land within it;
- extension or alteration must not result in disproportionate additions;
- replacement of a building, new building is in the same use and not materially larger;
- limited infilling, and limited affordable housing;
- redevelopment of brownfield land, which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt.

(With thanks to Campaign to Protect Rural England)