

Planning and Regeneration
Lancaster City Council
Town Hall
Dalton Square
Lancaster
LA1 1PJ

27 November 2015

Dear Sirs

Developing a Local Plan for Lancaster District 2011-2031 –Consultation Response
North Lancashire Green Belt Review

Slyne with Hest Parish Council's response to the proposed North Lancashire Green Belt review, includes consideration of each of the areas as set out by Lancaster City Council that are within Slyne with Hest Parish Boundary, namely:

1. Central Area Green Belt GB4, Slyne/Bolton-le-Sands
2. East of Morecambe GB2, Slyne with Hest/Torrisholme
3. North Lancaster GB1, Hammerton Hall, Slyne (Beaumont/Green Lane), Halton

We have also, given consideration to the North Lancashire Green Belt as a whole in its historical context. The current Green Belt boundaries were designated and established in 1991 as part of the Lancashire Structure Plan and Lancaster District Local Plan; having been identified in the 1980s and adopted by the City Council again in 2004 as part of the Local Plan.

As you are aware, Green Belt is an area of land that is kept open to prevent urban sprawl. The most important attribute to Green Belts is their openness and permanence; they are not designated specially for their environmental importance. They help to protect the openness of the wider countryside, be it agriculture, forestry or other natural features.

The National Green Belt Policy is well established and clearly defined in the National Planning Policy Framework document (NPPF). Central Government, as part of the NPPF has highlighted the importance of securing the long term permanence and openness of Green Belts under PPG2 and NPPF para 80 in that the Green Belt must serve five purposes

- To check the unrestricted sprawl of large 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 assist in urban regeneration, by the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

It further states that existing Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances. Slyne with Hest Parish Council considers the review of the North Lancashire

Green Belt to be too ambitious in scale and the following specific comments are based on Lancaster City Council's Green Belt Review Methodology, draft, 2015. Each site is considered in turn.

1. Central Area Green Belt GB4, Slyne/Bolton-le-Sands

Slyne with Hest Parish Council wishes to argue for the complete retention of the Green Belt in this area because;

- It checks the unreactive sprawl of Slyne with Hest and Bolton-le-Sands from the large urban neighbours of Lancaster and Morecambe, it is clearly demonstrable that this area has a strong role in preventing urban development along the A6 road; it contains no development and has a strong sense of openness and provides an undeveloped gap between Slyne and Bolton-le-Sands.
- It is preventing Carnforth to the north of Bolton-le-Sands and Lancaster and Morecambe to the south of Slyne with Hest merging into one conurbation.
- The Green Belt designated here is safeguarding a key area of open landscape from encroachment; it contains countryside and no urbanising development.
- The Green Belt is helping to preserve the setting and special character of the historic village of Slyne and Grade 2 listed building, Manor Farm. The area is adjacent to the Conservation Area of Slyne village and has a strong relationship with the historic core of the village setting, in that rural conservation areas form part of the rural landscape and are especially vulnerable to the impact of development. The Green Belt protects the historic setting around the core 'building, trees and earthworks of Ashton Bank. Its core has 8 Grade II and 1 Grade II* listed structures plus other associated features.
- The North Lancashire Green Belt, by its very nature, is encouraging urban regeneration in Lancaster's and Morecambe's urban core. This designation must continue to direct future development to support the sustainability of these urban areas.
- The significance of the Green Belt to the north allows us to see the historic topography of its setting on a 40m high terrace, among the coastal drumlin's going down to the shoreline

2. East of Morecambe GB2, Slyne with Hest/Torrisholme

The current Green Belt is within both the parish boundary of Slyne with Hest and the boundary of Morecambe Town Council. Slyne with Hest Parish Council consider the Green Belt designation vital here because;

- The Green Belt checks the unrestricted sprawl of Morecambe eastwards, preventing ribbon development along Hasty Brow Road and Powderhouse Lane. This area has a strong sense of openness due the topography of the area.
- The Green Belt prevents neighbouring towns from merging into one another and clearly prevents Morecambe (Torrisholme) merging with Lancaster at a critical point north of the M6 link road.
- The Green Belt here safeguards the countryside from encroachment. The area under review contains some existing limited development (farm, canal and railway) but the overarching feature is the Scheduled Ancient Monument Torrisholme Bowl Barrow situated in its western boundary.

- This area will be even more important in the future following the opening of the M6 Link Road. It has potential as a Country Park for Hest Bank, Torrisholme and Morecambe with public access down existing ancient foot and towpaths.

3. North Lancaster GB1, Hammerton Hall, Slyne (Beaumont/Green Lane), Halton

Slyne with Hest Parish Council is disappointed to note that despite reassurances from Lancashire County Council and Lancaster City Council (as strategic planning authorities) that it would not affect the North Lancashire Green Belt designation. Although we do recognise that the road has been part of the County Councils strategic roads plan since 1949.

- The new topographical features created by the Link Road further separates the village of Slyne from Green Lane and this area is now more closely linked with north Lancaster.
- The Council would like to point out that this area contains; a Grade 2 Listed Building, Beaumont Hall (plus associated landscape and buildings.) A building of historic interest Hammerton Hall. There are know Iron Age and Medieval remains and landscape features. There are areas of sensitive flora and fauna. Also, an ancient roadway linking Lancaster to Bolton le Sands “Black Castle Lane or Green Lane.” Any development here should be sensitive and appropriate in style and scale.

Slyne with Hest Parish Council wishes the Council to take into account the individual points relating to each of the three GB areas that are within the parish boundary and consider our holistic approach to the reclassification of the North Lancashire Green Belt.