



ET Planning

The Grey Belt Toolkit

Tools you need to unlock development in the Green Belt

Green Belt and Grey Belt Definitions

Green Belt: The Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.

Grey Belt: The 'Grey Belt' relates to poorly performing Green Belt land. 'Grey Belt' is defined as land in the Green Belt comprising previously developed land and/or any other land that, in either case, does not strongly contribute to any of purposes (a), (b), or (d).

The 'Green Belt' Purposes

Purpose 'a'

"to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas"

Purpose 'b'

"to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another"

Purpose 'c'

"to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment"

Purpose 'd'

"to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns"

Purpose 'e'

"to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land"

Case Study: 50 Dwellings Allowed in Bromsgrove District

Appeal case 3356219 (Allowed 15/08/25).

First successful major Grey Belt appeal in Bromsgrove District, on a greenfield site.

ET Planning provided evidence on the site's limited contribution to Green Belt purposes a, b and d, its sustainability, the LPA's housing deficit and how the 'golden rules' were met (following a prior engagement exercise).



5 Questions to Ask Before Progressing the Grey Belt Route

1) Is the site located within a reasonable walking distance of a well-connected station?

If so, it could benefit from a new route to development under Policy GB7(H)

2) Does the Authority in question have a demonstrable unmet need for the type of development proposed?

Target LPA's with a lack of 5 year housing land supply - or where Housing Delivery Test results are below 75%

3) How have the Authority assessed the land in the past?

A good starting point is to review the Local Plan evidence base. How have the Council assessed the land previously, even if part of a wider parcel?

4) If the golden rules are relevant, what is the strategy in terms of affordable housing uplifts, and necessary improvements to infrastructure and green spaces?

Is there are a relevant Neighbourhood Plan, which may give clues as to what infrastructure improvements may assist - or you may need to consider an engagement exercise with local residents?

5) In terms of the inappropriate development test, is the development in a sustainable location?

How does the site fit within the spatial strategy for the Authority, to demonstrate compliance with Policy TR3? Have surrounding application and appeal decisions been reviewed?

Our Grey Belt Toolkit

Grey Belt Assessment



Housing Supply Statement



Sustainability Statement



Engagement



The Team



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