Green Spaces

Climate Change Panel – 20 Sept 2025

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Elmbridge Borough Council

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What do we mean by green space?

- Private or public?
- Private gardens
- Private land with no built development
- Parks and formal gardens
- Woodland/Countryside
- River corridors
- Outdoor Sports Facilities
- Informal green space in housing areas
- Play areas, skateboard parks
- Allotments, community gardens
- Cemeteries
- Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANG)









Why does development happen on green space?

- Need for housing, employment, schools and other development
- Choice of owners how to use their land
- Council land – Green Spaces team
- Private land – permitted development or planning applications



How can communities get involved?

In relation to Planning:

- Comment on planning applications
- Comment on Local Plan consultations



How can we use green spaces to absorb more emissions?

- Retain green spaces
- Plant trees
- Improve habitats
- Choice of planting
- Less hardstanding
- Green walls, roofs









How is it decided whether green space is built on?

- Planning application:
  - Consider proposal against policies and guidance
  - Take into account comments from public and consultees
  - Planning balance.
- Council has land it owns/manages
- Some development doesn’t require any planning permission - “permitted development”

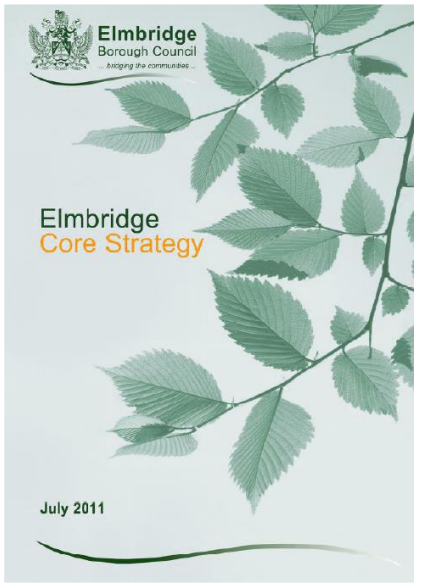


How is it decided whether green space is built on?

Policy CS14 of the Core Strategy 2011:

- "The Council will protect, enhance and manager a diverse network of accessible multi-functional green infrastructure by:

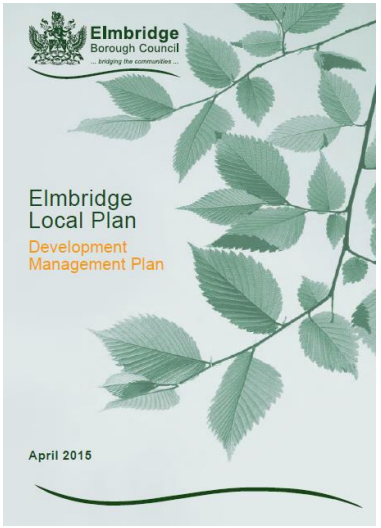
  1. Continuing to give a high level of protection to and improving the Borough's green infrastructure assets …."



How is it decided whether green space is built on?

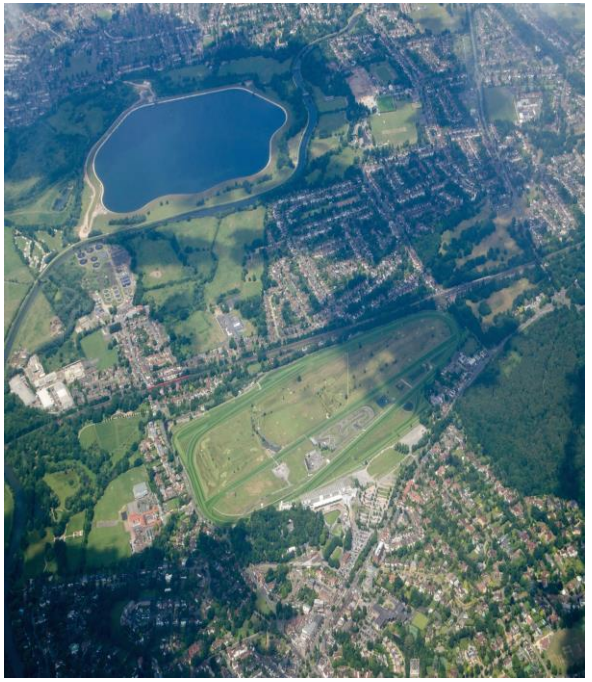
Policy DM20 of the Development Management Plan 2015:

- “Local Green Space will be protected from inappropriate development unless there are very special circumstances that would clearly outweigh the potential harm…
- Other areas of existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:
  - An assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements,
  - The loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location, or
  - The development is for alternative sports and recreation provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss.”



How is it decided whether Green Belt is built on?

- There are specific planning policies relating to Green Belt
- The Government have recently relaxed some of the rules
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) updated 12 December 2024
- Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) updated 27 February 2025
- Introduction of Grey Belt and Golden Rules
- Green Belt isn't always green



What does Green Belt look like?



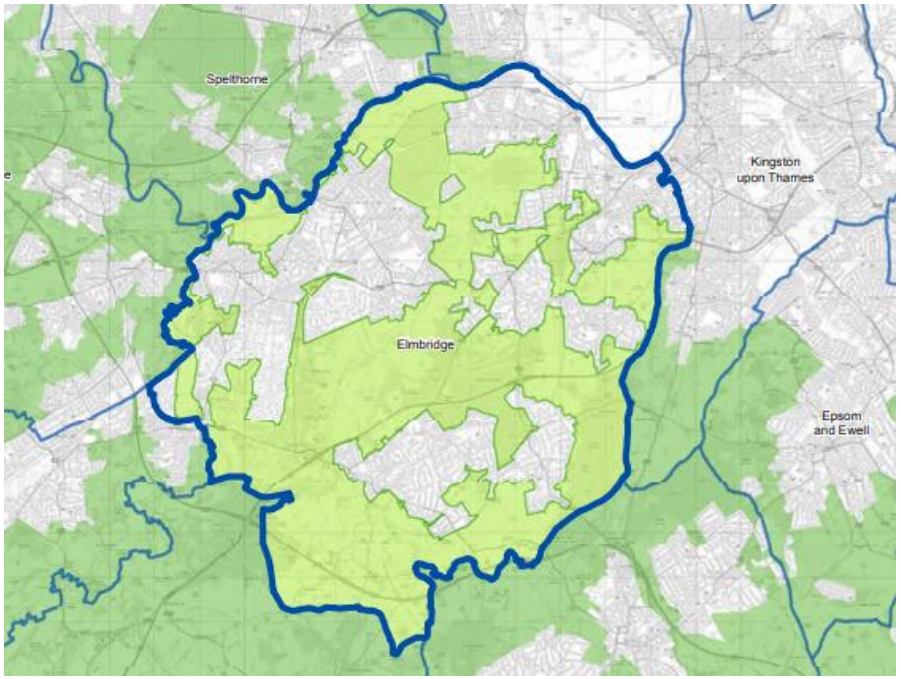




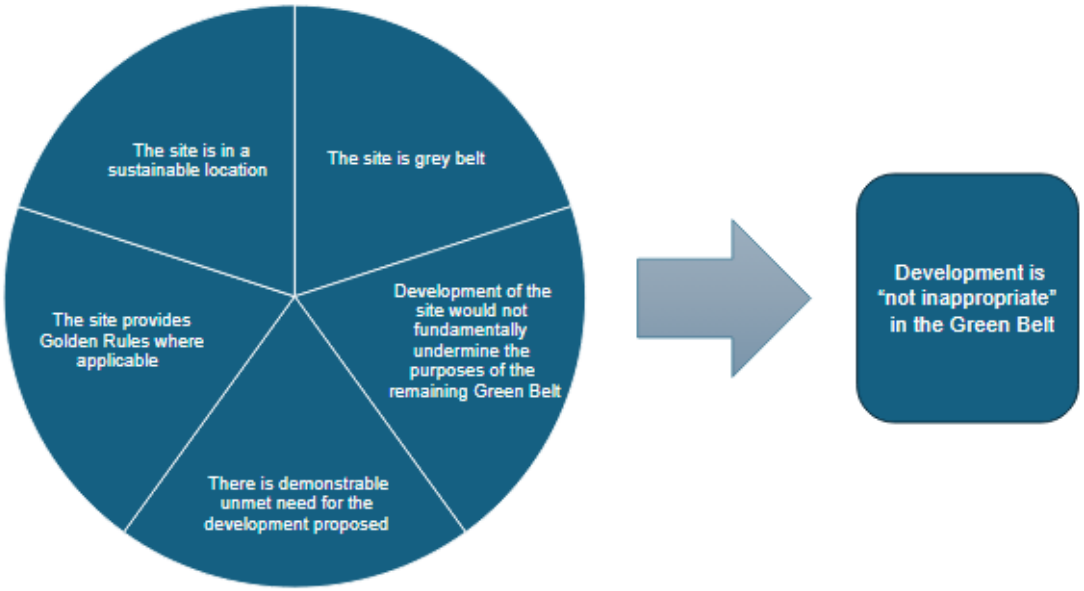


Extent of Elmbridge Green Belt

- 57% of the borough is designated as Green Belt



Grey Belt and Golden Rules



Biodiversity Net Gain

- Requirement for larger development to contribute an improvement to biodiversity as part of planning permission
- 10% increase calculated using calculator tool
- Not just based on area – significance of habitat and other calculations
- Excludes household extensions, self-build, development less than 25sqm
- Government considering relaxing requirements for 1-9 dwellings



Any questions?

