
DEVELOPMENT CONTROL POLICY

GUIDANCE NOTE 9

Conversion and Re-use of Buildings in the Green Belt

Adopted 10th January 2007



This guidance note is aimed at developers and applicants who wish to convert or re-use buildings in the Green Belt. The contents of this guide are as follows:-

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PRE TEXT

This pre-text to the Development Control Policy Guidance Note No.9 sets out the details of the consultation and publicity steps that were undertaken during the preparation of this Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

This Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) has been produced in the form of a Development Control Guidance Note. It is intended to support policies contained in Bury's adopted UDP (adopted 31st August 1997). This Note provides a more formal basis to advice which is given to applicants on a regular basis and is now a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

This SPG was approved for a consultation exercise by the Council's Executive on the 28th June 2006. This was after a period of internal consultation with Officers in various Sections of the Council. Views were sought from members of the public and private organisations and relevant interest groups over a six-week period (10th July 2006 to 21st August 2006). Copies of the Draft SPD were made available for inspection at the planning reception desk and in the Borough's main libraries. Further copies could also be obtained on request and the draft was also made available on the Council's website.

The draft SPD was revised in the light of the comments received through the consultation process. The revised version went to Council's Executive on the 10th January and was formally adopted.

In accordance with the requirements in PPS12, a Statement of Consultation document was drawn up, which outlined the representations received and the Authorities response to these. This statement is available for inspection on request, together with the adopted version of the SPG.

Any queries you may have regarding this Note, the Bury UDP or Bury's Local Development Framework should be directed to the Planning Policy Team on 0161 253 5283.

1 - INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Around 60% of the Borough is designated as Green Belt. Historically, the land within the Borough's Green Belt has been predominantly used for agricultural purposes, together with significant industrial uses, such as mills associated with watercourses. However, the decline in localised farming practices and in the manufacturing industry now means that there are a number of redundant or semi-redundant buildings that are no longer used or required for their original purpose.
- 1.2 Pressure to convert these buildings for other uses, mainly residential use, has increased in recent years. Old barns and stables, for example, have been converted for domestic purposes to help meet the housing demand in the Borough. Planning applications for the conversion of these buildings have been assessed against Bury's Unitary Development Plan (UDP) Policy OL1/4 and National Guidance set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 2 (PPG2). However, these policies lack the background detail that future applicants for the conversion of buildings in the Green Belt should have regard to.
- 1.3 Therefore, in order to ensure that future conversions are sympathetic to the Green Belt objectives, this note provides additional guidance on:
 - the types of buildings that may be suitable for conversion in the Green Belt;
 - sustainability considerations, including access to public transport and other local services;
 - design considerations;
 - the need to ensure that any proposal would have no greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than its current building or existing use;
 - the need to prevent associated development and activities with a particular use from harming the openness of the Green Belt (e.g. 'sub-urban style gardens); and
 - ensuring the environmental quality, amenity, wildlife interest and character of the Green Belt is maintained and where possible, enhanced.
- 1.4 This guidance note should be read in conjunction with other relevant planning policies and guidance notes. The content of this note may also be useful when developing proposals in those areas of open land in the Borough that are not covered by Green Belt designation in Bury's Unitary Development Plan.

2 - BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Council has received a steady increase in the number of planning applications and enquiries for the conversion and re-use of buildings in the Green Belt in recent years. Some proposed schemes have fallen short of achieving a new use that is fully compatible with its surroundings.
- 2.2 Issues arising from proposals for the conversion and re-use of buildings include the question of whether the new use is sustainable in terms of its location and access to public transport and local services.
- 2.3 Another important factor to take on board relates to design considerations, such as the use of inappropriate materials or poorly designed internal layouts which require the need for extensive modifications to the exterior of a building. Design issues can have a significant effect on whether a proposal affects the original character of a building or would have a greater impact on the Green Belt, and thus is an important factor in determining planning applications for conversions.
- 2.4 Design issues are also important when considering the treatment and use of land surrounding a building. A building may not be suitable for conversion for a particular use if associated activities or inappropriate boundary treatments would have a negative impact on the openness of the Green Belt (e.g. if it required large areas of car parking).

3 - POLICY CONTEXT / FRAMEWORK

Planning Policy Guidance 2 - Green Belts

- 3.1 Planning Policy Guidance Note 2 (PPG2) sets out a list of criteria which should be taken into account when considering the re-use of buildings in the Green Belt. It states that the reuse of buildings is not inappropriate development providing:
 - it does not have a materially greater impact than current use;
 - strict control is exercised over associated uses of land to ensure no conflict with the openness of the Green Belt;
 - the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction and are capable of conversion without major or complete reconstruction, and;
 - the design of the buildings is in keeping with their surroundings.
- 3.2 It is clear from the criteria listed above that one of the key considerations concerning the re-use of buildings is the impact that the proposal would have upon the openness of the Green Belt.
- 3.3 One of the main criteria against which this can be tested relates to visual amenity. PPG2 states that the Green Belt should not be harmed by developments that would not in themselves prejudice the purposes of including land within the Green Belt, but which might be visually detrimental by reason of siting, materials or design.

- 3.4 In cases where development is regarded as inappropriate in the Green Belt, either by the use or design issues, PPG2 states that it is for the applicant to show why permission should be granted under ‘**very special circumstances**’¹. Each case would be judged on its own merits.

Planning Policy Statement 7 – Sustainable Development in Rural Areas (PPS7)

- 3.5 Planning Policy Statement 7 (PPS7) supports the re-use of appropriately located and suitably constructed existing buildings in the countryside where this would meet sustainable development objectives. Generally, it states that support should be given to such proposals particularly where buildings are closely related to country towns and villages, and where development is for economic or community uses, or to provide housing in accordance with the policies of Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPS3) – Housing.

Bury Unitary Development Plan (1997)

- 3.6 Under new planning legislation, the policies within the Bury Unitary Development Plan (UDP) have been ‘saved’ from the commencement of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Therefore, they continue to be the policies against which supplementary planning guidance and any new Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) are linked to, as required under Regulation 13 (7) of The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations, 2004.
- 3.7 This Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is designed to support existing UDP Policy OL1/4 – Conversion and Re-use of Buildings in the Green Belt. This is a criteria based policy used to assess the suitability of buildings in the Green Belt for possible conversion or re-use. A copy of this policy can be found in Appendix 1.

4 – SUITABILITY OF BUILDINGS

Suitability for Conversion

- 4.1 It is important to note that the proposed use for a specific building must relate to the type, nature and location of a building. For example, it would be inappropriate to convert lightweight structures such as small timber stables or large Dutch Barns to residential use. Likewise, it would not be appropriate to convert buildings in the green belt to large scale retail development.
- 4.2 In addition, the conversion of buildings in the Green Belt, for whatever use, will only be acceptable where it can be demonstrated that the building(s) in question can be converted without major rebuilding or reconstruction. The Council will normally require a structural survey to be

¹ PPG2 states that when an applicant is demonstrating special circumstances, harm caused to the openness of the Green Belt by a development must be clearly outweighed by other considerations.

submitted along with the planning application. There have been problems in the past, where once work has started on the conversion, it has been later found that the building is incapable of conversion or has actually collapsed due to instability of the existing structure.

- 4.3 Also, proposals for conversions will normally only be considered for existing buildings which are considered to possess quality architectural or historical merits or contribute to the character of an area. Buildings that are of more modern construction and design such as portal frame agricultural buildings or that incorporate materials such as concrete blocks and asbestos sheeting are not usually considered acceptable for conversion. In short, buildings which detract from the quality of the environment will not generally be acceptable unless it can be demonstrated that the proposals would have a positive impact upon the openness of the Green Belt by removing the harm caused by the existing building.
- 4.4 Applicants should be made aware that barn owls and bats often use farm buildings, in particular the traditional style as roosting or nesting sites. Both species are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Consequently, if either species is present within a building, no work can be undertaken without prior consultation with English Nature. It is worth noting that in most cases, work will be delayed until the breeding and nesting season is over. However, in some cases the provision of alternative accommodation for the affected species may be necessary.
- 4.5 It should also be noted that where the Council has reason to suspect that an applicant has tried to abuse the planning system by constructing a new farm building, for example, with the intention of early conversion to another use, it will investigate the history of the building to establish whether and how frequently it was ever used for the purpose it was built (see 5.13)
- 4.6 Overall, the suitability of buildings for conversion and re-use will only be considered acceptable where:
- the original character and appearance of the building will be retained;
 - the proposals would contribute to the aesthetic value of the building which should in itself normally be of architectural merit;
 - the existing building should be of substantial construction and structurally sound;
 - the proposals would not have a materially greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt; and
 - the building is suitable for the proposed use, including associated use of surrounding land.
 - the building has been inspected for the presence of protected species, and if present, the appropriate action to protect the species taken

Suitability of Proposed Use

- 4.7 There are numerous types of uses that redundant buildings in the Green Belt may be put to. This is dependant on numerous factors including the scale, bulk and design of the building as it exists. It is also very much dependant on the previous use of the building. The table below gives some examples of what existing buildings could be converted to.

Use Type	Potential Use
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agricultural 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Storage • Office/Workshop • Farmshop
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offices • Camping Barns • Craft Centres
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Village Hall / Meeting Room • Sports Facilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residential 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holiday Accommodation • Tourist Facilities

- 4.8 It should be noted that the above list is not exhaustive and for illustration purposes only to identify potential futures uses. However, this does not automatically mean that all such uses would be acceptable and it is always advisable to contact a Planning Officer to discuss any proposal before the formal submission of a planning application. In some cases, the applicant would have to demonstrate 'very special circumstances' as to why the proposal should be permitted.
- 4.9 The proposed use of a building is also very much dependant on the location and the nature of the intended use. Some uses will be considered more sustainable than others because of the level of trips associated with it for example. All proposed conversion schemes will be assessed against their potential impact on the environment. In determining this issue, the Council will take into account the level and type of traffic generation a proposal may have, noise and air pollution considerations, access arrangements for all sections of the community and any sustainable transport initiatives (e.g. access to public transport and local services and provision for non-motorised modes of transport).

Inappropriate Development

- 4.10 As already referred to, if a proposal is considered to be inappropriate development, the onus is on the applicant to demonstrate 'very special circumstances' as to why planning permission should be granted. As each parcel of land is unique, each application will be judged on its own merits to see if it is outweighed by other considerations.

5 – GENERAL GUIDANCE

- 5.1 Before looking at more detailed guidance relating to specific design considerations, it is important to point out some general principles relating to Green Belt conversions.

Farm Diversification

- 5.2 The Council, in line with national, regional and local planning policy supports proposals for farm diversification. Farm diversification proposals should be well researched, contribute to sustainable development objectives, help to sustain the agricultural enterprise and be at a scale that is consistent with its location. A supporting statement and business plan may be required to accompany your planning application.

Commercial Uses

- 5.3 Generally the conversion of buildings to an employment use such as a small workshop or storage use would be acceptable, subject to other relevant planning considerations, such as access and amenity considerations.
- 5.4 The type of employment use is a key issue and considerations would include the question of whether the use would, in principle, assist in the diversification of the rural economy by providing new sources of employment. If the use proposed is part of a farm diversification scheme then it should supplement rather than replace existing farming activities. If it is unconnected to farming, it should still be in keeping with and have no adverse impact on its surroundings.
- 5.5 The scale of activity is another important consideration, and the use should have minimum impact on the surrounding area as well as any neighbouring properties.

Alterations to Buildings

- 5.6 It is accepted that a certain amount of alteration work will be necessary to accommodate modern living and working conditions. However, this work must be balanced with the need to retain important features which give the building its distinctive identity. Any alterations should not have any materially greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt.
- 5.7 When determining the type of accommodation to be provided within the building for example, the position and size of existing openings should be taken into account. This exercise will help determine both the number of rooms which can be formed and the uses that they may be more suited to. The purpose of this is to prevent excessive additional openings which could harm the character of the building or area, which in turn could harm the setting of the Green Belt.
- 5.8 Some buildings may be characterised by few window and door openings, or have apparently unusual configurations which were appropriate to the

previous use. Therefore, the simplicity of the building should be retained by keeping new openings to an absolute minimum in number and size. To achieve this all existing openings should be retained and re-used. In exceptional circumstances where the creation of new opening(s) are permitted, they will be limited and preferably be located on elevations away from public views.

Extensions

- 5.9 The Council believes that most buildings should in principle be preserved in their original form, unless material considerations dictate otherwise. Buildings should, therefore, be large enough for conversion without the need for substantial and alien new extensions. Many buildings in the Green Belt have a functional simplicity which is part of their appeal. Changes to the roof slope, amendments to the eaves line and the addition of porches for example, can result in a significant loss to the building's original character.
- 5.10 If an addition to the building is unavoidable, extensions should be a subsidiary element of the original building which can be achieved by keeping the extension small scale, simple and unobtrusive. Each proposed extension will be considered on its own merits.
- 5.11 Extensions should be proportionate to the size of the original dwelling, excluding any previous extensions carried out under permitted development rights or with planning permission. In general terms, the Council may allow an extension to be up to a third of the volume of the original dwelling. However, each proposal will be considered on its own merits and even an increase of up to a third by volume may not be appropriate in certain situations (e.g. if the site is a particularly sensitive area or if there are other amenity issues).

Dereliction

- 5.12 Buildings that have fallen into substantial disrepair will not be allowed to be rebuilt and/or converted. A structure will be considered to need rebuilding when a significant proportion of the structure has been so damaged that it does not resemble the original character of the building. A structural engineers report should be submitted with your planning application to confirm the suitability of the building for conversion including minor repair works or incidental reinstatement being required.

Redundancy

- 5.13 The redundancy of a building will not normally be a factor that is assessed during the course of a planning application. However, where a proposed conversion involves a relatively new agricultural building constructed under permitted development rights the Council may investigate the history of the building to establish whether it was ever used for the purpose for which it was claimed to have been built. The Council will seek to avoid abuses to permitted development rights in the

hope of obtaining planning permission for a use that would otherwise be unacceptable.

Access and parking

- 5.14 The consideration of access and parking provisions will be applicable to all planning proposals for conversion and re-use of a building. Access roads and junctions with the public highway should be suitable to take the traffic generated by the proposal. The new use should not lead to excessive traffic generation on inadequate local road networks.
- 5.15 Any proposed use that would involve significant increases in the level of outside storage or areas for parking vehicles is unlikely to be acceptable due to the likely impact on the openness of the Green Belt.

Listed Buildings

- 5.16 Alterations to Listed Buildings and development within Conservation Areas are subject to special controls and such proposals must be accompanied by an application for Listed Building Consent (LBC). In such cases, the retention of internal features (e.g. roof structure) can be an important consideration; therefore full-working drawings will be required. Issues relating to proposals located within a historic environment or alterations proposed to locally important buildings, features and spaces should also be carefully considered. Proposals should be based upon a sound understanding of historic environment issues. In most cases, a design and access statement (see paragraph 7.2) will be required to be submitted with your planning application. Advice may be sought on the content of this. It is advisable that you contact the Council's Conservation Officer if you are uncertain about whether a building is listed or wish to ascertain the extent to which a Listed Building may be modified (contact details can be found at the end of this document). A planning application for LBC would be treated on its own merits.

Building Regulations

- 5.17 Applicants should note that Buildings Regulations must be met as part of their proposals. It is important that account of these requirements are taken at the design stage and during the course of a planning application as later amendments to planning permissions and listed building consents arising from requirements under the Building Regulations, such as means of escape, ventilation arrangements, access for persons with disability and drainage, will not normally be approved if such amendments result in unacceptable changes to the character of the building. Applicants are advised to contact the Council's Building Control Section at the earliest opportunity **before** submitting a planning application.

6 - DETAILED GUIDANCE AND DESIGN MATTERS

- 6.1 Where the principle of conversion is accepted, it is essential that the historic and architectural integrity of the building remains as unaltered as possible so that the special qualities of the building are respected and its character preserved.
- 6.2 Due to the diverse nature and form of buildings in the Green Belt it is not possible to set down a standard approach to design and provide an exhaustive list of guidelines that would apply to every situation. However, in general terms it is advisable that an early meeting is arranged with the Council's Planning Officers to discuss the details of your proposal.
- 6.3 The key objective of any conversion scheme should be to facilitate the new use whilst retaining the original character and identity of the building. Attempting to change the appearance of the building to something distinctly different from the building's original design and character will normally be unacceptable.
- 6.4 Where it is proposed that a single building is to be split into multiple units, the design should retain the original unified character of the building. Ideally, the number of units to be provided should be kept to the absolute minimum as the fewer the number of units proposed, the easier it will be to retain the original character.

External Alterations

- 6.5 The following guidelines should be used when considering proposals for re-using buildings in the Green Belt. In particular, the following bullet points should be taken account of when designing proposals for conversions:
 - If extensions are proposed they should be built of similar materials and in a style to match the existing building;
 - In order to retain the character and appearance of the building the number of new window and door openings should be minimised. The retention of the existing window and door pattern with minimum, if any, additions is often crucial to the success of a proposal and is, therefore encouraged;
 - Any new window and door openings should be designed to match any existing openings in terms of height, proportion and sill and lintel details. Unsympathetic openings that do not reflect the character or design of the original building are unlikely to be acceptable.
 - All materials and colours should match the existing ones and preferably be softwood or temperate hardwood window frames (which meet Forestry Stewardship Council (FSC) Standards) and external timber should normally be painted (avoiding overly bright colours).

- The treatment of all openings, and in particular full height cart doors requires careful consideration. These large openings should be glazed, or if not required functionally, retained as a feature by filling the opening with appropriate materials such as vertical timber boarding.
- Any external features relating to the original use of the building (e.g. hay loft doors and jibs, stone steps) should be retained. This will assist in the preservation of the original identity of the building, and help to protect the character of the Green Belt in Bury.

Roof Form

- 6.6 It is normally important to retain the original roof form and profile. In particular, with farm buildings the clean sweep of the roof is usually a traditional characteristic and should be kept. New dormer windows and chimney stacks interrupt this and introduce a domestic appearance which is inappropriate to the character of such buildings and the general character of the Green Belt.
- 6.7 The introduction of skylights into roof space may be acceptable in some circumstances as long as they do not have a disproportionate coverage and are positioned as unobtrusively as possible. They should also reflect the materials and general character and design of the building.

Materials

- 6.8 The original materials used in the construction of the building should be retained and restored. Where this is not possible, suitable complementary materials should be used.

Rainwater Goods and Services

- 6.9 Rainwater goods should normally be coloured black. Cast iron materials are normally required on Listed Buildings. In the case of some Listed Barns, it may be necessary for rainwater goods, soil pipes, etc., to be contained within the internal fabric. Further information should be sought from the Borough's Conservation Officer (details can be found in the contacts section of this SPD).

Internal Alterations

- 6.10 Existing roof timbers should be retained, if necessary with selective replacement or strengthening of defective timbers. These can form an attractive feature if kept exposed by the use of a warm roof construction.
- 6.11 Every effort should be made to retain original spaces and volumes as far as possible.
- 6.12 Gas, electricity and water service boxes should be located out of view, preferably internally.

Additional Buildings

- 6.13 Garaging and other buildings required to serve the conversion should, where possible, be provided by the conversion of suitable outbuildings if available. As stated throughout this guidance note, associated buildings or structures will not generally be considered acceptable if they have a detrimental impact on the Green Belt.

Landscaping

- 6.14 In order to protect the character and setting of buildings in the Green Belt, it is important that any proposed landscaping reflects the buildings previous use and location in a sensitive area.
- 6.15 For example, existing large open areas such as farmyards should not be divided up to provide a range of small domestic gardens. The conversion of buildings to residential use should ensure that the surrounding land is kept as non-domestic as possible. The reason for this is to prevent the suburban appearance of residential areas and gardens encroaching into the Green Belt, which would harm the openness of it.
- 6.16 Landscaping schemes should be kept simple. Any new hedges, tree planting etc, should be of locally native species. Information on acceptable species can be sought from the Council's Landscape Architect (see Section 10).
- 6.17 Existing original surfacing materials such as brick paviors, flagstones or cobbles should be retained and repaired where necessary. All new areas of surfacing should be in matching or appropriate traditional materials.
- 6.18 Enclosure of boundaries should be by walls and traditional hedges. Domestic-style fencing panels will not normally be appropriate.

Access

- 6.19 Where no existing access track to the property exists, care will be needed in the positioning of any new access road to ensure that it does not adversely affect the character and appearance of the area. The precise route and proposed materials should be discussed with the Local Planning Authority.

Permitted Development Rights

- 6.20 Where planning permission is granted for conversion to another use, it is likely that permitted development rights for extensions, alterations, outbuildings and, if located within a farm complex, additional buildings will be removed.

Planning Conditions

- 6.21 Applicants should be aware that it may be necessary to attach planning conditions to proposals that are granted planning permission.

7 – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION REQUIRED FOR PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Information to be submitted with planning applications

- 7.1 Applicants who wish to submit their planning application in outline form, should ensure that there is sufficient information included to assess its impact upon the openness of the Green Belt. DCLG Circular 01/2006 lists information to be included in outline planning applications. Depending on the nature of the proposal, it may be necessary to provide additional information such as a design and access statement or a visibility appraisal. If you are in any doubt, it may also be advisable to speak with a Planning Officer, prior to submission.

Access and Design Statements

- 7.2 DCLG Circular 01/2006 requires both outline and full planning applications to be accompanied by design and access statements with the exception of:
- Applications for change of use only
 - Applications for engineering or mining operations
 - Householder applications (e.g. extensions or outbuildings for purposes incidental to the residential use), where no part of the dwelling or its curtilage fall within a "designated area". (In the local context, designated areas include conservation areas, areas of outstanding natural beauty and certain Sites of Special Scientific Interest).

If you are unsure as to whether your proposal requires a design and access statement, please contact a member of the Development Control Team at Bury Planning Department. Further information on the content of design and access statements can be found in DCLG circular 01/2006 and also in the detailed guidelines published by CABE (Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment). Contact details can be found at the back of this document.

Structural Condition of the Building

- 7.3 Applications **must** be accompanied by the report of a qualified structural engineer demonstrating that the building is physically capable of adaptation with minor, re-building of the existing structure. To reduce the possibility of unforeseen structural problems arising during the conversion work, a thorough appraisal of the building and a realistic expectation of the amount of adaptation will be required. If the extent of re-building proposed is considered excessive, planning consent is likely to be withheld in line with national and local planning guidance. It should be noted that proposals to demolish and rebuild the whole structure will normally be strongly resisted.

Details of the Conversion

- 7.4 Applications to change the use of redundant buildings must be accompanied by detailed plans showing the effect of the conversion on the external appearance of the building. It is essential that the details of the proposed scheme retain and where possible, enhance the original character of the building.

Protected species

- 7.5 As mentioned in UDP Policy OL1/4, barn owls and bats often use traditional farm buildings as roosting or nesting sites. Both species are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Consequently, if either species is present within a building, no work can be undertaken without prior consultation with English Nature whose contact details are listed at the back of this guidance note. It is worth noting that, in most cases, work will be delayed until the breeding and nesting season is over. However, in some cases the provision of alternative accommodation for the effected species may be necessary.

Plans and layouts

- 7.6 To demonstrate that the character and appearance of the building and surrounding countryside will be protected, detailed plans should be submitted showing the layout of the site at a scale of 1:500.
- 7.7 Detailed elevational drawings and floor plans showing the existing building and proposed conversion at a scale of 1:100 will be required.
- 7.8 Plans should indicate garden areas, parking spaces, boundary treatments, external storage, landscaping and existing and proposed accesses. Details of how the proposal will be served, for example with electricity and telephone connections should be submitted.
- 7.9 Where there are adjacent buildings, which are to remain in agricultural use, details of the existing and proposed use of such buildings will be required.

8 – MONITORING & CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 Decisions relating to planning applications for the conversion and re-use of buildings in the Green Belt will be monitored on an on-going basis in order to assess the effectiveness of this SPD.
- 8.2 Decisions that have been made contrary to case officer or planning policy officer recommendation will be specifically investigated to see whether references are made to issues covered in this guide. It may then be necessary to modify the guidance note.

9 - BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- Planning Policy Guidance Note 2: Green Belts, DETR (1995)
- Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas, DETR (2004)
- Bury Unitary Development Plan (1997)

10 – FURTHER INFORMATION & CONTACTS

However, if you require further information, please contact:

Development Control Team

Planning Division
Craig House
5 Bank Street
Bury BL9 0DN
Tel: 0161 253 5432

Anne-Marie Greene

Planning Officer
Planning Policy Section
(Planning Division)
5 Bank Street
Bury BL9 0DN
Tel: 0161 253 6154
E-mail: a.m.greene@bury.gov.uk

Mick Nightingale

Conservation Officer
Development Projects Group
(Planning Division)
5 Bank Street
Bury BL9 0DN
Tel: 0161 253 5317

Chris Kalupa

Landscape Architect
Landscape Practice,
4th floor,
Craig House
5 Bank Street
Bury BL9 0DN

Greater Manchester Ecology Unit

Ryecroft Hall
Manchester Road
Audenshaw
Manchester M34 5ZJ
Tel: 0161 371 9171

Natural England (English Nature)

Pier House
Wallgate
Wigan
WN3 4AL
Tel: 01942 820342
www.naturalengland.org.uk

Chris Wilkinson

Greenspace Projects Manager
Environmental Projects group
(Planning Division)
Craig House
5 Bank Street
Bury BL9 0DN
Tel: 0161 253 5269

Dave Dutton

Wildlife Officer
Environmental Projects group
(Planning Division)
Craig House
5 Bank Street
Bury BL9 0DN
Tel: 0161 253 7667

Building Control Section,

Craig House,
5 Bank Street
Bury BL9 0DN
Tel: 0161 253 5314
E-mail: building.control@bury.gov.uk

Commission for Architecture and Built Design (CABE)

1 Kemble Street
London
WC2B 4AN
Tel 020 7070 6700
www.cabe.org.uk

APPENDIX 1 – UDP POLICY

OL1/4 - Conversion and Re-use of Buildings in the Green Belt

The conversion and re-use of buildings in the Green Belt is not inappropriate development and will be permitted providing that:

- a) it does not have a materially greater impact than the present use on the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land in it;
- b) any extension of re-used buildings, and any associated uses of land surrounding the building do not conflict with the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land in it (e.g. because they involve extensive external storage, or extensive hardstanding, car parking, gardens, boundary walling or fencing);
- c) the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction, and are capable of conversion without major or complete reconstruction;
- d) the form, bulk and general designs of the buildings are in keeping with their surroundings;
- e) suitable access and likely traffic generation can be accommodated without creating a traffic hazard or the need for major road improvements or lengthy new routes;
- f) all the necessary services can be provided without extensive works;
- g) it can be established by the applicant, to the satisfaction of the local planning authority, whether or not the building contains any protected species, such as bats or barn owls. Where it is shown such species are present, measures to prevent damage to habitats will be required.

Justification

This policy acknowledges that when suitable safeguards are taken, the re-use or conversion of buildings should not prejudice the openness of the Green Belt since the buildings are already there. Re-use or conversion can help to secure the continued stewardship of land, especially by assisting farm diversification and can contribute to the objectives for the use of land in the Green Belt.

Buildings that have become so derelict that they could be brought into use only by complete or substantial reconstruction do not fall within the scope of this policy.

In the case of residential conversions there will be an emphasis on preventing 'suburban' style gardens in areas of otherwise surrounding open countryside.

Section 9 of the 1981 'Wildlife and Countryside Act' affords protection to both protected species and any structure or place which such a species may use for shelter or protection. Agricultural buildings are valuable habitats for barn owls, bats and other protected species.

Prior to the granting of planning permission the local planning authority will have to be satisfied that no such species are present. Where it is shown that such species are present, measures must be implemented which ensure that any damage to such habitats is prevented.

 Lãngüagê Liñè
0161 253 5000

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Craig House, 5 Bank Street, Bury, BL9 0DN

Graham Atkinson BA DMS
January 2007

Director of Environment & Development Services
Bury ● Prestwich ● Radcliffe ● Ramsbottom ● Tottington ● Whitefield
Metropolitan Borough of Bury