

# CHAPTER 3 - GREEN BELT

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### **3.1**            **INTRODUCTION**

- 3.1.1            The Green Belt encompasses some 42% of the Borough stretching in a horse shoe from Chessington Road in the west through Horton Country Park and the hospital lands, Epsom Common, Woodcote Park, Epsom and Walton Downs, North Looe and Priest Hill to Cheam Road in the east. On the west and south sides, there are wide links with further extensive Green Belt areas in Chessington and Headley respectively, and in the east there is a link through Cuddington Golf Course to Banstead Downs.
- 3.1.2            Land uses are dominated by a limited number of large users compared with the more fragmented pattern often found elsewhere in the Green Belt. Public open space comprises about 40% of the Green Belt land in the Borough (Horton Country Park, Epsom Common, Epsom and Walton Downs); agriculture, including horse grazing and parts of the hospital lands, accounts for some 30%; institutional uses (education and hospitals) for about 20%; and private open space (principally the RAC Club, Woodcote Park) for about 10%. In total, just over 60% of this land is at present in some form of public ownership or control, a much higher proportion than is generally the case elsewhere in the Green Belt.
- 3.1.3            The Green Belt within the Borough is relatively shallow in depth and a relatively large part of it accommodates five large hospitals to the north-west of Epsom town centre. These predate the establishment of the Green Belt and adversely affect the open character of the Green Belt. As a result of Government policy to close psychiatric hospitals and to meet the needs of people with learning disabilities and people with a mental illness as far as possible within the community, three of these hospitals have now closed and the other two may be released within the plan period.
- 3.1.4            Epsom has long been associated with horse racing and the racecourse and Grandstand complex of buildings are sited within the Green Belt on Epsom Downs. There are also a number of racehorse training establishments within the Green Belt in the Borough.
- 3.1.5            The Green Belt has successfully protected a belt of open land around Epsom and Ewell, which, with its many public open spaces, notably Epsom Downs and the Common, is an invaluable asset making a major contribution to the pleasing character of the Borough. This could easily be lost forever if pressures for development were not tightly controlled.

### **3.2**            **POLICY CONTEXT**

#### **Government Policy**

- 3.2.1            The Green Belt is a long established element of planning policy which has developed incrementally since the introduction of the 1955 Green Belts Circular 42/55. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the most important attribute of Green Belts is their

openness. The essential characteristic of Green Belts is their permanence and Green Belt boundaries once defined should be altered only exceptionally.

3.2.2 The Green Belt has five purposes:

- 1 to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- 2 to prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another;
- 3 to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- 4 to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- 5 to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict land and other urban land.

3.2.3 Once Green Belts have been defined, the use of land in them has a positive role to play in fulfilling the following objectives:

- to provide opportunities for access to the open countryside for the urban population;
- to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation near urban areas;
- to retain attractive landscapes, and enhance landscapes, near to where people live;
- to improve damaged and derelict land around towns;
- to secure conservation interest; and
- to retain land for agricultural, forestry and related uses.

3.2.4 The extent to which the use of land fulfils these objectives is however not itself a material factor in the inclusion of land within a Green Belt, or in its continued protection. The purposes of including land in Green Belts are of paramount importance to their continued protection, and should take precedence over the land use objectives.

3.2.5 There is a general presumption against inappropriate development in the Green Belt; it should not be approved except in very special circumstances.

3.2.6 In recognition of the difficulties which were being encountered in the attempt to reconcile Green Belt policy objectives with the need to secure new uses for redundant hospitals in the Green Belt, the Government issued Circular 12/91 "Redundant Hospital Sites in Green Belts: Planning Guidelines" in 1991. Circular 12/91 set out guidelines which related specifically to the control of their future development. These guidelines formed the basis of the distinct set of Green Belt

policies in the Borough Local Plan relating specifically to the Epsom Hospitals Cluster area.

- 3.2.7 Circular 12/91 has been cancelled and Government advice is now that institutional uses in extensive grounds do not constitute appropriate forms of development in the Green Belt and that provision can be made for redevelopment and limited infilling within major developed sites within the Green Belt provided that they are identified as such within a local plan.

### County Structure Plan Policy

- 3.2.8 The Surrey Structure Plan supports the purposes of the Green Belt as set out in national policy guidance and recognises the importance of the retention of the Metropolitan Green Belt in resisting further urbanisation of the County.
- 3.2.9 Policy PE2 of the Surrey Structure Plan sets out the broad basis for the control of development within the Green Belt in Surrey. It makes a distinction between development intended to meet the essential requirements of agriculture or forestry, outdoor sport and recreation, cemeteries, and institutions within extensive grounds which will be permitted and other forms of development including, mineral workings, waste disposal and gypsy caravan sites which may be appropriate or necessary in the Green Belt but which will not be considered acceptable as of right. The County Structure Plan policies relating to institutions within extensive grounds and to infilling at and redevelopment of major developed sites have been overtaken by more recent government advice.
- 3.2.10 Policy DP4 of the Structure Plan makes provision for 2,000 dwellings on the Epsom Hospitals Cluster, but states that, in the event that the adopted local plan proposals for the Cluster provide for less than 2,000 dwellings, it will be necessary to make provision for additional dwellings elsewhere in the County in a further review of the Structure Plan.
- 3.2.11 Policy EH.H1 of the Epsom and Ewell Borough Local Plan, which was adopted in 1995, provided for about 1,500 dwellings and associated development on the Hospitals Cluster, should all four of the hospitals within the Hospitals Cluster be released. The precise number of dwellings which will be built on the Hospitals Cluster will depend on the extent of the closure programme and will be established through Development Briefs.

## **3.3 OBJECTIVES**

- 3.3.1 The area of Green Belt within the Borough makes a vital positive contribution to the relatively high environmental quality of Epsom and Ewell and the protection and enhancement of the Green Belt is therefore considered to be a key element in a strategy for sustainable development and one of the most important objectives of the Plan. However, the successful protection of the Green Belt limits the scope for development in Epsom and Ewell and requires that development be accommodated principally within the built-up area.

3.3.2 Local Plan studies indicate that the extent of development required to provide for the needs of the Borough, which is proposed in this plan, can be accommodated successfully in the built-up area without resulting in over development or town-cramming and have not therefore identified a need to release Green Belt land. However, the Borough Local Plan, which was adopted in 1995, provided for residential development of about 1500 dwellings on the Epsom Hospitals Cluster to meet the housing needs of the County in accordance with Central Government advice and Structure Plan Policy and, in December 1997, the Council granted outline planning permission for the redevelopment of the Epsom Hospitals Cluster, in accordance with the relevant Borough Local Plan policies. The Council also considers that essential new buildings associated with racehorse training establishments may be appropriate development within the Green Belt.

3.3.3 The Borough Council has identified the following objectives for the area of Green Belt within the Borough:

- (1) to maintain the Green Belt boundary;
- (2) to resist inappropriate forms of development within the Green Belt;
- (3) to protect the best and most versatile agricultural land;
- (4) to retain the racehorse industry without undermining Green Belt policy objectives;
- (5) to promote the use of land for outdoor sport and recreation whilst ensuring that the provision of facilities for sport and recreation does not undermine Green Belt policy objectives;
- (6) to provide opportunities for access to the open countryside for the urban population;
- (7) to retain attractive landscapes, and enhance landscapes;
- (8) to secure nature conservation interests;
- (9) to ensure that development of redundant hospitals is consistent with Green Belt policy objectives.

3.3.4 Further policies relating to objectives 5 - 9 are also set out in Chapter 4 (Open Space and Recreation), Chapter 5 (Natural Environment) and Chapter 8 (The Epsom Hospitals Cluster).

### **3.4 THE GREEN BELT BOUNDARY**

3.4.1 Central Government has confirmed its commitment to Green Belt policy and to the long-term protection of green belts. Whilst the Surrey Structure Plan indicates the broad area of the Green Belt within the County, the function of the District-wide Local Plan is to define the precise boundary of the Green Belt, allowing for the

future growth requirements of the urban area to be met by the phased provision of further land for development so as to ensure that the boundary will not need to be altered in the foreseeable future.

- 3.4.2 The boundaries of the Green Belt within the Borough were defined in the Epsom and Ewell Borough Local Plan which was adopted in 1995 and the Central Government advises that, once defined, the Green Belt boundary should be altered only in exceptional circumstances. The review of the Green Belt boundary, which was carried out as part of the preparatory work for the Borough Local Plan therefore resulted in proposals, which were confined to securing minor alterations which provided for a more logical and defensible boundary and for a more consistent approach to areas of relatively low density residential development which project into open countryside.
- 3.4.3 In accordance with Central Government advice and Structure Plan policy, provision has been made for all of the hospital sites within the Epsom Hospitals Cluster to remain within the Green Belt whether or not they are redeveloped.
- 3.4.4 The Borough Council considers that it has made adequate housing and employment provision for the Plan period within the urban area without the need to alter the established Green Belt boundaries to provide for any development requirements.

**GB1 THE METROPOLITAN GREEN BELT WILL BE MAINTAINED ALONG THE EASTERN, WESTERN AND SOUTHERN BOUNDARIES OF THE EXISTING BUILT-UP AREA AND EXTENDING TO THE OUTER BOROUGH BOUNDARY AS DEFINED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP.**

### **3.5 GENERAL POLICIES ON DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE GREEN BELT**

- 3.5.1 The Secretary of State for the Environment has accepted that the hospital sites, which are located on the western side of the Borough within the Green Belt, constitute very special circumstances. The Surrey Structure Plan makes provision for 2,000 dwellings on the Epsom Hospitals Cluster subject to the provisions of the adopted Local Plan and the release of the sites by the Health Authority. Local studies indicate that about 1500 dwellings could be provided if all of the sites within the Epsom Hospitals Cluster were released. The development of the Hospitals Cluster is dealt with in Chapter 8 of this Plan. Development not specifically provided for in Chapter 8 will remain subject to the general presumption of Green Belt policy and the overriding consideration will be to ensure that development has no greater impact on the extent or open character of the Green Belt than the existing hospital development.
- 3.5.2 The Surrey Structure Plan sets out the broad basis for the control of development within the Green Belt in the Borough. It makes a distinction between development intended to meet the essential requirements of agriculture or forestry, which will be permitted and other forms of development including outdoor recreational facilities, mineral workings, institutional development in extensive grounds and gypsy caravan sites which may be appropriate or necessary in the Green Belt but which

will not be considered acceptable as of right. The Council fully supports the restrictive approach to the Green Belt which is set out in national guidance and in the Structure Plan.

### Racehorse Training Establishments

- 3.5.3 Epsom has a world-wide reputation in the horse racing industry. It is the venue for the Derby and the Oaks, two of the five classic horse races. The area is also renowned for racehorse training. The number of racehorses in training is approximately 300 spread among 12 trainers. The prime gallops are on Walton Downs but there are winter training gallops on Epsom Downs. There are also all-weather training gallops of 5 and 9 furlongs. The Council considers the racecourse and the local racehorse training industry to be an important part of the local heritage and economy, and an integral part of the Green Belt in the south of the Borough.
- 3.5.4 Essential new buildings associated with racehorse training establishments may be appropriate development in the Green Belt provided that of themselves they preserve its openness and do not conflict with any of the purposes of including land in it, as set out in paragraph 3.2.2, or the requirements of the policies aimed at protecting the natural environment in Chapter 5.
- 3.5.5 To assess whether there is an essential need for the buildings, an applicant will be expected to demonstrate that:
- (i) they will help sustain the horse racing industry in the Borough;
  - (ii) their size is commensurate with the established needs of the enterprise;
  - (iii) the need could not be met by the refurbishment or replacement of a building that exists on the site.
- 3.5.6 Where residential accommodation forms part of a scheme, the applicant will also be expected to show that:
- (i) it is essential to the proper functioning of the establishment for one or more full-time workers to be readily available at most times;
  - (ii) the need could not be met by another existing dwelling either within the establishment or in the area, which is suitable and available for occupation by the workers.

The protection of horses from theft or injury by intruders will not by itself be sufficient to justify a dwelling. Any planning permission for residential accommodation will be subject to an appropriate occupancy condition.

~~GB2 OTHER THAN FOR:~~

~~(1) AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY;~~



~~(II) ESSENTIAL FACILITIES FOR OUTDOOR SPORT AND OUTDOOR RECREATION, CEMETERIES, AND OTHER USES OF LAND WHICH PRESERVE THE OPENNESS OF THE GREEN BELT AND DO NOT CONFLICT WITH THE PURPOSES OF INCLUDING LAND IN IT;~~

~~(III) LIMITED EXTENSION, ALTERATION OR REPLACEMENT OF EXISTING DWELLINGS;~~

~~(IV) LIMITED INFILLING OR REDEVELOPMENT OF THE MAJOR DEVELOPED SITES;~~

~~(V) CHANGES OF USE OF EXISTING BUILDINGS THAT ACCORD WITH POLICY GB9;~~

~~PROPOSALS FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF NEW BUILDINGS IN THE GREEN BELT WILL, IN THE ABSENCE OF VERY SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES, BE REFUSED PLANNING PERMISSION.~~

### 3.6 AGRICULTURAL LAND

3.6.1 More than a quarter of the Green Belt land within the Borough is in agricultural use including the grazing of horses. The Council fully supports the retention of the agricultural use of this area of land as generally appropriate to the maintenance of the attractive landscape.

3.6.2 It is national policy to protect the best and most versatile agricultural land from unnecessary and irreversible losses. This land ranges from excellent (Grade 1) to good quality (Sub-Grade 3A). It is regarded as the most flexible, productive and efficient farming land and is thus best suited to adapting to the changing needs of agriculture. The published One Inch maps show no agricultural land in the Borough classified as Grade 1 or 2 by the Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food and very little of the agricultural land in the Borough has been definitively graded. However a detailed Agricultural Land Classification survey in response to a development proposal identified more than 10 ha of Grade 2 agricultural land in East Ewell. The Council will seek to resist the permanent loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land and of any land where its use for agriculture makes an important contribution to the pleasing character of the Green Belt.

**GB3 WITHIN THE GREEN BELT PERMISSION WILL NOT BE GRANTED FOR DEVELOPMENT WHICH WOULD RESULT IN THE PERMANENT LOSS OF THE BEST AND MOST VERSATILE AGRICULTURAL LAND OR WHERE THE USE OF THE LAND FOR AGRICULTURE MAKES AN IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTION TO THE CHARACTER OF THE GREEN BELT.**

### 3.7 AGRICULTURAL DWELLINGS

3.7.1 Policy GB2 allows for the erection of dwellings which are necessary to meet the essential requirements of local agriculture or forestry and the Council will grant permission for such development within the Green Belt where the need is proven. In cases where permission is granted appropriate restrictive occupancy conditions will be applied.

~~GB4 PROPOSALS FOR NEW PERMANENT DWELLINGS TO SUPPORT EXISTING AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED PROVIDED THAT:~~

~~(I) THERE IS A CLEARLY ESTABLISHED FUNCTIONAL NEED;~~

~~(II) THE NEED RELATES TO A FULL-TIME WORKER, OR ONE WHO IS PRIMARILY EMPLOYED IN AGRICULTURE, AND DOES NOT RELATE TO A PART-TIME REQUIREMENT;~~

~~(III) THE UNIT AND THE AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITY CONCERNED HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED FOR AT LEAST THREE YEARS, HAVE BEEN PROFITABLE FOR AT LEAST ONE OF THEM, ARE CURRENTLY FINANCIALLY SOUND, AND HAVE A CLEAR PROSPECT OF REMAINING SO; AND~~

~~(IV) THE FUNCTIONAL NEED COULD NOT BE FULFILLED BY ANOTHER DWELLING ON THE UNIT, OR ANY OTHER EXISTING ACCOMMODATION IN THE AREA WHICH IS SUITABLE AND AVAILABLE FOR OCCUPATION BY THE WORKERS CONCERNED.~~

### 3.8 SETTLEMENTS WITHIN THE GREEN BELT

3.8.1 There are a number of low density residential areas and relatively isolated or loose knit groups of houses within the Green Belt. None of these could properly be classified as a rural settlement and the Council has not defined any of these as rural settlements wherein infilling or rounding off would be acceptable.

3.8.2 The Plan makes provision for about 1500 dwellings and associated development on that part of the Green Belt which lies within the Epsom Hospitals Cluster. Although this will result in substantial areas of relatively compact development, the Plan does not provide for any of them to be excluded from the Green Belt and it is not proposed that they be classed as settlements wherein infilling will be permitted. This approach conforms with the advice from Central Government and arises out of the very special circumstances associated with the programmed closure of the psychiatric hospitals.

3.8.3 Proposals for the rebuilding and extension of dwellings in the Green Belt within the Epsom Hospitals Cluster Area will also be required to comply with the provisions of the additional policies relating to the rebuilding and extension of dwellings in the Green Belt which are set out in Chapter 8 of the Plan. These additional policies take full account of the special circumstances of the proposed development on the hospital sites.

**3.9 SETTLEMENTS SURROUNDED BY THE GREEN BELT**

3.9.1 Langley Vale, The Wells and Stamford Green are substantial areas of relatively compact residential development which are close to the urban area and to which 'urban' policies have been applied in the past. With the Green Belt boundary drawn tightly around these settlements, it is considered appropriate to continue to apply 'urban' policies to these settlements. Stamford Green also lies within a conservation area.

**3.10 REBUILDING, AND EXTENSION OF DWELLINGS IN THE GREEN BELT**

3.10.1 The number of dwellings within the Green Belt in the Borough is at present relatively small and the great majority are sited close to built-up areas. The Council does not therefore consider that it would be appropriate to seek to restrict the size of extensions to houses in the Green Belt solely in order to prevent a reduction in the stock of small houses. The Council will however seek to ensure that proposals for extensions to houses in the Green Belt satisfy the requirements of policy GB5.

3.10.2 Proposals for the rebuilding and extension of dwellings in the Green Belt within the Epsom Hospitals Cluster area will also be required to comply with the provisions of the additional policies relating to the rebuilding and extension of dwellings in the Green Belt which are set out in Chapter 8 of the Plan. These additional policies take full account of the special circumstances of the proposed development on the hospital sites.

**GB5 PROPOSALS FOR THE REBUILDING OR EXTENSION OF DWELLINGS IN THE GREEN BELT WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED IF THE PROPOSALS WOULD NOT:**

- (I) LEAD TO AN INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF DWELLINGS WITHIN THE GREEN BELT;**
- (II) SIGNIFICANTLY CHANGE THE SCALE OF THE EXISTING PROPERTY HAVING REGARD TO THE SCALE OF EXISTING DEVELOPMENT IN THE IMMEDIATE LOCALITY;**
- (III) DETRACT FROM THE APPEARANCE AND SETTING OF THE EXISTING DWELLING;**

- (IV) **DETRACT FROM THE RURAL CHARACTER OF THE AREA;**
- (V) **LEAD TO DIFFICULTIES IN THE PROVISION OF SERVICES.**

### **3.11 CONVERSION OF DWELLINGS WITHIN THE GREEN BELT**

3.11.1 There is a general presumption against the conversion of dwellings within the Green Belt which are suitable for occupation to non-residential uses or to a number of separate residential units. Given the restraint policies which are operative within the Green Belt, the Borough Council will only permit the conversion of such houses to alternative residential uses if such development is necessary to secure the continued beneficial use of the property.

3.11.2 Appropriate alternative residential uses may include conversion to provide accommodation for certain types of non-private households, for example, homes for the elderly or private nursing homes or for subdivision to form a number of separate residential uses. The introduction of an appropriate alternative residential use should not adversely affect the appearance or setting of a building or the rural character of the area by reason of the scale and nature of the proposed use, alterations to the property or increased parking provision and traffic generation. It should also not require the extension of the property. Additional policies which relate specifically to the conversion of dwellings in the Green Belt within the Epsom Hospitals Cluster area are set out in Chapter 8 of the Plan.

#### **GB6 WITHIN THE GREEN BELT, PERMISSION WILL BE GRANTED FOR THE CHANGE OF USE FROM A SINGLE DWELLING TO TWO OR MORE DWELLINGS OR ALTERNATIVE RESIDENTIAL USES WHERE THE PROPOSAL WOULD NOT:**

- (I) **ADVERSELY AFFECT THE APPEARANCE OF THE EXISTING PROPERTY AND ITS SETTING;**
- (II) **DETRACT FROM THE RURAL CHARACTER OF THE AREA;**
- (III) **GIVE RISE TO DEMANDS FOR EXTENSIONS OR NEW BUILDINGS;**
- (IV) **LEAD TO DIFFICULTIES IN THE PROVISION OF SERVICES.**

### **3.12 MAJOR DEVELOPED SITES WITHIN THE GREEN BELT**

3.12.1 Within the Borough, there are seven major developed sites within the Green Belt, all of which are occupied by institutional uses in extensive grounds. Five of these are hospital sites and two are educational establishments. Of the five hospital sites,

four (Long Grove, The Manor, St Ebba's and Horton) are within the Epsom Hospitals Cluster area and are covered by the policies in Chapter 8 of the Plan which relate specifically to them. The fifth (West Park Hospital) lies outside the Epsom Hospitals Cluster area to the north of Christ Church Road. Of the two sites occupied by educational establishments, the one lies to the east of Reigate Road and is occupied by the North East Surrey College of Technology (NESCOT) and the second lies to the west of College Road and Longdown Lane South and is occupied by Epsom College. The three major developed sites to which policies GB7 and GB8 which follow are applicable are the following:

1. West Park Hospital, Christ Church Road;
2. North East Surrey College of Technology, Reigate Road;
3. Epsom College, College Road.

Some buildings at West Park Hospital are unused and it is likely that part of the site will become available for redevelopment during the Plan period. The Borough Council is concerned to maximise the range of employment opportunities in the Borough, especially given the gradual reductions in local healthcare employment. The Council is therefore working with the health authorities to seek employment-based activities on any land released at West Park. The boundaries of the three MDS' shown on the Proposals Map are for identification purposes only.

### Infilling

3.12.2

The Council considers that limited infilling may help to improve educational provision within the Borough without further prejudicing the Green Belt. However, given the extent of recent developments by the North East Surrey College of Technology (NESCOT), the scope for further infilling on that site is now much more limited than it is at the Epsom College site. In the case of West Park hospital, limited infilling may help to consolidate and improve health-care provision and to secure jobs without further prejudicing the Green Belt. In this context, infilling means the filling of small gaps between built development. The Council has therefore identified these three sites as major development sites within the boundaries of which limited infilling will be permitted in accordance with the provision of Policy GB7. Where partial redevelopment is proposed, the Borough Council will apply Policy GB7 to the remaining portion of the site, and in this way ensure that infilling to accommodate the displaced uses does not involve a major increase in the developed proportion of the site.

**GB7 PROPOSALS FOR INFILLING WITHIN THE BOUNDARIES OF MAJOR DEVELOPED SITES AS IDENTIFIED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP WILL BE PERMITTED PROVIDED THAT THE DEVELOPMENT WOULD NOT:**

- (I) HAVE A GREATER IMPACT ON THE PURPOSES OF INCLUDING LAND IN THE GREEN BELT THAN THE EXISTING DEVELOPMENT;**

- (II) EXCEED THE HEIGHT OF THE EXISTING BUILDINGS;  
AND
- (III) LEAD TO A MAJOR INCREASE IN THE DEVELOPED PROPORTION OF THE SITE.

Redevelopment

3.12.3

There is no reason to believe that the current educational uses at the North East Surrey College of Technology (NESCOL) or at Epsom College will contract or cease during the Plan period, but it is expected that a significant number of buildings within the site occupied by West Park hospital will become redundant during the Plan period. Whether they become redundant or continue in use, the complete or partial redevelopment of major developed sites may offer the opportunity for environmental improvement without adding to their impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land within it. The Council considers that redevelopment will be acceptable in accordance with the provisions of Policy GB8 below.

~~**GB8 PROPOSALS FOR THE COMPLETE OR PARTIAL REDEVELOPMENT OF MAJOR DEVELOPED SITES AS IDENTIFIED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP WILL BE PERMITTED PROVIDED THAT THE DEVELOPMENT WOULD:**~~

- ~~(I) NOT HAVE A GREATER IMPACT THAN THE EXISTING DEVELOPMENT ON THE OPENNESS OF THE GREEN BELT AND THE PURPOSES OF INCLUDING LAND IN IT, AND WHERE POSSIBLE HAVE LESS;~~
- ~~(II) CONTRIBUTE TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE OBJECTIVES FOR THE USE OF LAND IN GREEN BELTS;~~
- ~~(III) NOT EXCEED THE HEIGHT OF THE EXISTING BUILDINGS;~~
- ~~(IV) NOT OCCUPY A LARGER AREA OF THE SITE THAN THE EXISTING BUILDINGS (UNLESS THIS WOULD ACHIEVE A REDUCTION IN HEIGHT WHICH WOULD BENEFIT VISUAL AMENITY);~~
- ~~(V) IN THE CASE OF PROPOSALS FOR PARTIAL REDEVELOPMENT, ACCORD WITH THE PROVISIONS OF A COMPREHENSIVE BRIEF FOR THE WHOLE OF THE SITE APPROVED BY THE COUNCIL;~~
- ~~(VI) NOT REQUIRE ADDITIONAL EXPENDITURE BY THE PUBLIC SECTOR ON INFRASTRUCTURE, NOR OVERLOAD LOCAL FACILITIES.~~

- 3.12.4 The relevant area for the purposes of (IV) is the aggregate ground floor area of the existing buildings (the "footprint"), excluding temporary buildings, open spaces with direct external access between wings of a building, and areas of hardstanding.
- 3.12.5 The character and dispersal of proposed redevelopment will need to be considered as well as its footprint. For example many houses may together have a similar footprint to a few large buildings, but may be unacceptable because their dispersal over a large part of the site and enclosed gardens may have an adverse impact on the character of the Green Belt compared with the current development. The location of the new buildings should be decided having regard to the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including such land in it, the objectives for the use of land in Green Belts, the main features of the landscape, and the need to integrate the new development with its surroundings.
- 3.12.6 Where buildings are demolished rather than being left in a semi-derelict state pending decisions about their redevelopment, it will be necessary to keep suitable records for the purposes of "footprint" calculations. These should be agreed between the Council and the landowner before the demolition of any buildings.

#### West Park Hospital

- 3.12.7 At present a number of health service facilities are located at West Park Hospital. However, with the gradual restructuring of the health service, a number of buildings are unused, and it is likely that an increasing proportion of the site could become available for alternative uses during the Plan period. Most of the health uses remaining on the site are expected to be consolidated on the northern part of the site in the next few years.
- 3.12.8 The redeveloped site would be suitable for a range of uses including housing and for employment purposes. The mechanism for preparing proposals will broadly follow the pattern set by the Epsom Hospitals Cluster (explained in Chapter 8 of the Local Plan). The Council will expect preparation of a development brief to deal with issues such as the proportion of the site to be developed in each phase and the details of any highway works and public transport measures. Proposals will have to address the following:
- Environmental Issues. Green Belt policies will be applied to ensure that new development at West Park has no greater impact than the existing use. New development will be expected to take advantage of the area's attractive environment, maintaining the site's best built and natural features. The core of the site will be protected by Conservation Area status, the Water Tower will be retained as a statutory Listed Building, and Tree Preservation Orders will be made.
  - Movement Issues. Proposals should not generate more traffic than could be reasonably accommodated by an improved highway system and public transport; they should fund any highway works they make necessary and contribute to improving public transport cycle and pedestrian links to Epsom

town centre and other residential areas. To ensure the safe and efficient operation of remaining healthcare uses at the site, the Borough Council considers that any new development should fund a new access for motor vehicles separate from the existing West Park Road access. The Council accepts that new healthcare uses alone would be unlikely to justify the new access, but should not prejudice its provision.

- Community Facilities. The development should not displace local community facilities from the Borough (such as the Community/ Cottage Hospital), and may incorporate new facilities to serve local employees and residents.

3.12.9 The Borough Council adopted its Economic Development Strategy in 1996. The Strategy identified West Park as the only new site which could provide business/employment opportunities for the area. The site is seen as having particular potential to complement housing development at the Hospitals Cluster and provide new job opportunities in a part of the Borough once dominated by NHS employment. However, the Strategy notes that any development must incorporate measures to ensure that transport infrastructure can cope with new employment uses. The Strategy suggests links from West Park to the Chessington South railway line as one measure which could be secured by the development. West Park is also being investigated as a destination for a circular bus route connecting Epsom Town Centre the Hospitals Cluster and Ewell, and as a park-and-ride site. These measures are outlined in Local Plan Chapter 13 - Movement (section 13.7).

3.12.10 Possible uses for the site suggested in the Economic Development Strategy include a High Tech Business Park and a Health Hydro (a spa based health farm). A Health Hydro could build on Epsom's history as a spa town and the home of Epsom Salts. High Tech development could take advantage of the demand identified by the Government for science park or technopark development in the Greater London area. Such a park could involve high quality premises, shared services or networks providing for links between smaller businesses, and links to an education institution either locally (such as Kingston University), or in Central London (such as Imperial College).

### **3.13 BUILDINGS OUTSIDE MAJOR DEVELOPED SITES**

3.13.1 The openness of the Green Belt should not be harmed by the re-use of an existing building, because it is there already. Indeed it may prevent the building from being left empty and prone to vandalism and dereliction. The building should however be of sound, permanent and substantial construction, and complementary to its surroundings.

3.13.2 In considering the impact that a scheme may have upon the openness of the Green Belt or the purposes of including land within it, the Council will critically examine proposals which involve enlarging the shell of the existing building or include external works such as hardstandings, parking areas, walling and fencing. The Council will take into account the extent to which local building styles and materials are used.



~~GB9~~ ~~OUTSIDE THE MAJOR DEVELOPED SITES, THE CHANGE OF USE OF AN EXISTING BUILDING IN THE GREEN BELT WILL BE APPROPRIATE PROVIDED THAT:~~

~~(I) THE BUILDING:~~

~~(A) IS OF PERMANENT AND SUBSTANTIAL CONSTRUCTION;~~

~~(B) HAS A FORM, BULK AND GENERAL DESIGN WHICH IS IN KEEPING WITH ITS SURROUNDINGS;~~

~~(C) IS CAPABLE OF CONVERSION WITHOUT MAJOR OR COMPLETE RECONSTRUCTION; AND~~

~~(II) THE PROPOSED CHANGE OF USE WILL NOT HAVE A GREATER IMPACT THAN THE PRESENT USE ON THE OPENNESS OF THE GREEN BELT OR THE PURPOSES OF INCLUDING LAND IN IT.~~