

## Living within environmental limits

### **CS6: North Somerset's Green Belt**

Within North Somerset the boundaries of the Bristol – Bath Green Belt will remain unchanged during the plan period.

Further amendments to the Green Belt at Bristol Airport will only be considered once long-term development needs have been identified and exceptional circumstances demonstrated.

*This policy contributes towards achieving Priority Objective 7.*

### **Background**

3.91 The fundamental aim of the Green Belt is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open, the most important characteristic of the Green Belt being its openness. Green Belts perform five important functions in:

- preventing urban sprawl
- preventing towns from merging into one another
- safeguarding the countryside from encroachment
- preserving the setting and character of historic towns
- helping urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of underused and outworn urban land and buildings.

3.92 The Joint Replacement Structure Plan (2002) set out the general extent of the Bristol – Bath Green Belt, with the detailed boundaries defined through the North Somerset Replacement Local Plan (2007).

3.93 The protection and maintenance of the Green Belt is very important to the affected communities, and ensures a clear distinction between urban Bristol and rural North Somerset. It makes an important contribution to their local character and distinctiveness, and is highly valued and strongly supported.

### **The Core Strategy approach**

3.94 A key feature of Green Belts is their permanence. Green Belts are intended to be a long-term designation. Taking account of the recent changes to the Green Belt through the Replacement Local Plan (2007) and absence of any need for large scale further revisions to either the general extent or detailed boundaries of the Green Belt, no changes to the Green Belt are proposed in the Core Strategy.

3.95 There are two existing strategic developments which are constrained by Green Belt within North Somerset:

*Bristol Airport*

3.96 The Replacement Local Plan created an inset in the Green Belt to accommodate the medium term expansion requirements of Bristol Airport. Further Green Belt amendment would be premature in advance of exceptional circumstances being demonstrated through evidence regarding future expansion and its land use implications.

*Royal Portbury Dock*

3.97 The issue of port expansion was addressed through the Replacement Local Plan and land removed from the Green Belt and safeguarded for future port use. There is no further suitable, developable land remaining between the Port and the M5, and therefore no further Green Belt amendment is proposed.

**How and where the policy will be delivered**

3.98 Through applying the strong presumption against inappropriate development within the Green Belt.

**Monitoring and review**

3.99 Performance will be monitored by the assessment of planning applications, and developments within the Green Belt.

