



Campaign to Protect
Rural England

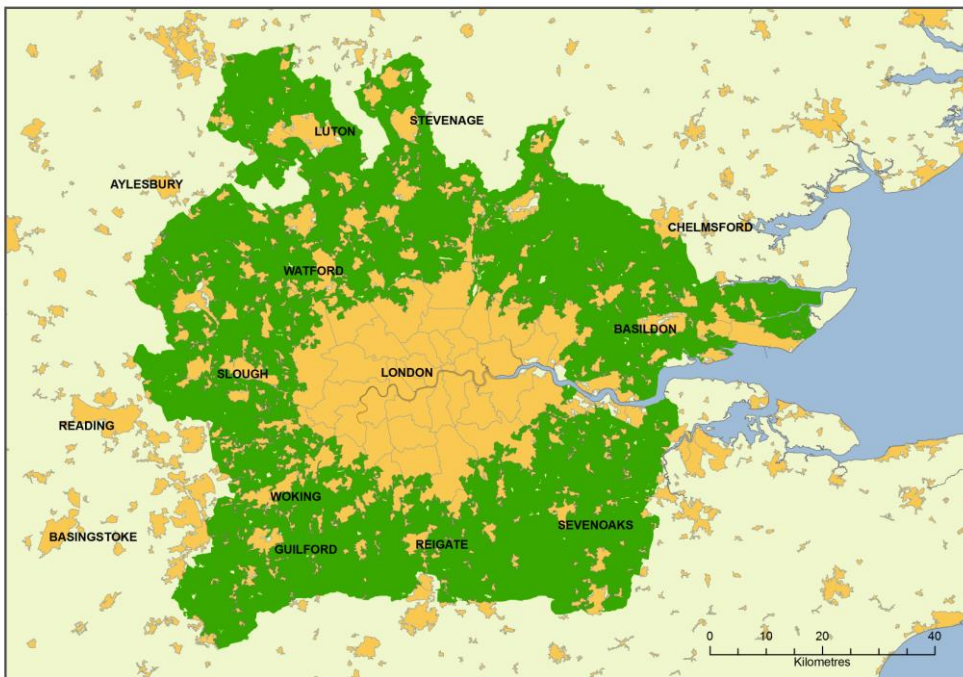
Green Belts: a greener future A joint report by CPRE and Natural England



The London (Metropolitan) Green Belt

Land Area: 484,173 hectares (3.7% of the total land area of England, 13,050,388 ha).

Total area of all Green Belts in England: 1.6 million hectares (13% of England's total land area).



What kind of place is the London Green Belt?

- It is the largest of England's 14 Green Belts, covering 30% of the total area of all Green Belt land in England.
- 92% of the Metropolitan Green Belt land is undeveloped land, but only 58% of the land is registered as being in agricultural use (compared with 71% of all land in England). There is a high prevalence of 'semi-urban' uses relying on open land, such as catteries, golf courses and pony paddocks.
- The Metropolitan Green Belt has a significant proportion (5,380 ha) of farmland covered by Higher Level Stewardship schemes, but a low overall proportion (51% of all land in agricultural use) of involvement in Natural England funding supporting environmentally sensitive farming ('agri-environment schemes'; the national proportion is 67%; Green Belt land overall 53%).

Key Facts

January 2010

Green Belt fact sheets covered in this series:

England

London (Metropolitan)

Avon

Burton/Swadlincote

Cambridge

Gloucester/Cheltenham

North West

Nottingham/Derby

Oxford

Hampshire/Dorset

South & West Yorkshire

Stoke-on-Trent

Tyne & Wear

West Midlands

York

These fact sheets support the report 'Green Belts: a greener future' available to download from: www.cpre.org.uk
www.naturalengland.org.uk

- It contains particularly important resources of both public rights of way (9,899 kilometres, or 20 metres per hectare) and woodland (18% of the overall land area). Landscape quality is being maintained in 55% of the area.
- This Green Belt is the most under pressure of any from proposals for new development, both in terms of infrastructure such as airports and transmission lines, and new housing.

Agriculture

14% (compared with 17% of England) is Grade 1 or Grade 2, or the ‘best and most versatile’ agricultural land.

57% (compared with 71% of England) or 274,564 ha is currently in agricultural use.

51% (144,741 ha) of the total agricultural land¹ is subject to Natural England funding supporting environmentally sensitive farming (‘agri-environment schemes’. 67% of agricultural land nationally, and 53% of all Green Belt agricultural land, is subject to agri-environment schemes).

Landscape Quality

55% of the area has ‘maintained’ or sustained its established landscape character; 42% is ‘diverging’ or transforming to a new character. Particular landscape strengths are in the condition of trees/woodland and the condition of rivers, respectively. Particular areas of concern are the condition of boundary features and changes to patterns of urban development and settlement.

119,561 ha (24%) is also designated as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. (Overall AONBs cover 2,064,684 ha, or 15.8% of England). Three AONBs – the Chilterns, Kent Downs and Surrey Hills – overlap with areas covered by the Metropolitan Green Belt.

Nature Conservation

24,995 ha is Site of Special Scientific Interest – 5% of the Green Belt area and 2.3% of national SSSI total. 88% of SSSIs are in either ‘favourable’ or ‘recovering’ condition, the same proportion as for SSSIs nationally. There are an additional 2,571 ha of Local Nature Reserves.

Public Access and Recreation

20 metres of public rights of way per hectare (England average is 14 metres per ha) and 14,944 ha of open access land.

6,475 hectares of Country Parks (1.3% of overall area; national proportion is 0.3% and total national area is 42,135 ha).

17,724 ha is Registered (historic) Park and Garden (3.7% of overall area; over 10% of the national total of 170,734 ha).

The London Loop path provides a long-distance walking route linking areas of this Green Belt to adjoining urban areas, public transport and the rights of way network around London. More details are available at www.tfl.gov.uk.

Broad-Leaf and Mixed Woodland

18% (compared to 8% of all land nationally) or 86,834 hectares of the land area is broadleaf and mixed leaf woodland – the highest percentage for any Green Belt.

¹ Note that the total for agricultural land on which the percentage covered by agri-environment schemes is based is higher than the total for agricultural land currently in use. This is because a small area of land classed as ‘agricultural’ is not currently in use.

Public Aspirations

Asked what Green Belt activities they would like to undertake in the next twelve month, the public in London most commonly chose

- Visiting Green Belt land on a day out with friends/family
- Visiting Green Belt land to get peace and quiet
- Buying food grown or produced in the Green Belt

When asked what they would like to see more of in the Green Belt, the public in London were keen to see

- Nature reserves
- Woodland walks
- New Parks

Asked if they would buy food known to have been grown or produced by farmers in the Green Belt local to them rather than buy food produced elsewhere, the following percentages of respondents in the three regions covered by London's Green Belt agreed:

66% London

85% East of England

88% South East