



**STAGE ONE GREEN BELT REVIEW:
Exceptional Circumstances (March 2024)**

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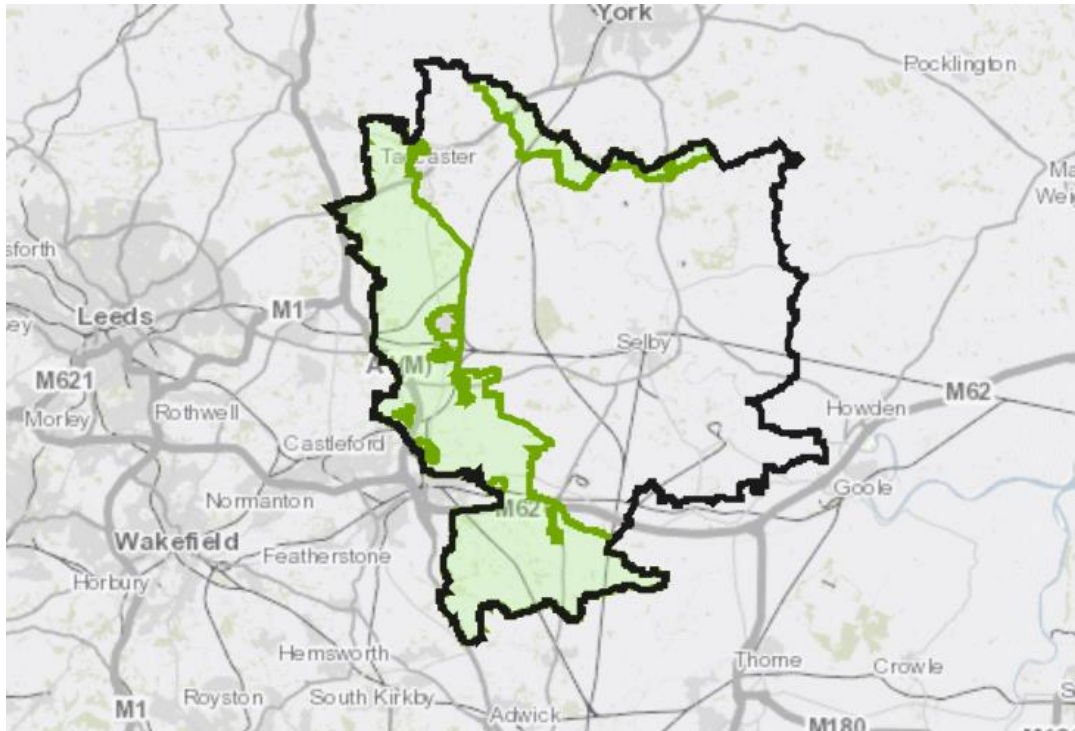
1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Stage One Green Belt Review supports the emerging Selby Local Plan which, once adopted, will provide an up-to-date strategy for sustainable growth for the former district area in the period to 2040.
- 1.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2023) requires that Green Belt boundaries only be altered where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified, through the preparation or updating of plans. Strategic policies should establish the need for any changes to Green Belt boundaries, having regard to their intended permanence in the long term, so they can endure beyond the Plan period.
- 1.3 This report considers whether any exceptional circumstances exist at the strategic level to justify the alteration of Green Belt boundaries to release land from the Green Belt for development purposes as part of the preparation of the Local Plan. If it can be demonstrated that exceptional circumstances do exist, the following further stages will be undertaken:
 - A Stage 2 report will examine all parcels of land comprising the Green Belt within the former district against the five purposes of the Green Belt as set out in the NPPF.
 - A Stage 3 report will consider site specific exceptional circumstances to justify the removal of specific sites from the Green Belt.

2. Background to the Green Belt in the former district

- 2.1 Green Belt in the former Selby district equates to a total of 19,240 hectares and incorporates parts of both the West Yorkshire and York Green Belts, as shown in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Green Belt in the former Selby district area



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- 2.2 The West Yorkshire Green Belt covers the western area of the former district and was originally established in the 1960s, with the primary objective of constraining further growth of the West Yorkshire conurbation.
- 2.3 The York Green Belt lies to the former district's northern boundary and was approved in principle in 1980, as part of the North Yorkshire Structure Plan. The main objective of the York Green Belt is to protect the historic setting of the City of York.
- 2.4 The area and boundaries of the West Yorkshire and York Green Belts which fall within the former district area were defined by and adopted through the Selby District Local Plan (2005).
- 2.5 The following table identifies which settlements are impacted by the Green Belt.

Table 1: Settlements impacted by the Green Belt

Local Service Centres	Tier 1 Villages	Tier 2 Villages	Smaller Villages
Sherburn in Elmet Tadcaster	Byram & Brotherton Eggborough & Whitley South Milford	Escrick Fairburn Monk Fryston & Hillam	Barkston Ash Beal Bilbrough Birkin Burton Salmon Colton Cridling Stubbs Kellingley Kirk Smeaton Lumby Newton Kyme Saxton Towton Womersley

3. Guidance on testing exceptional circumstances

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

3.1 The NPPF (2023) sets out at paragraph 145 that:

“... there is no requirement for Green Belt boundaries to be reviewed or changed when plans are being prepared or updated. Authorities may choose to review and alter Green Belt boundaries where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified, in which case proposals for changes should be made only through the plan-making process. Strategic policies should establish the need for any changes to Green Belt boundaries, having regard to their intended permanence in the long term, so they can endure beyond the plan period.”

3.2 Before concluding that exceptional circumstances exist to justify changes to Green Belt boundaries, paragraph 146 (NPPF, 2023) requires the strategic policy-making authority to be able to demonstrate that it has examined fully all other reasonable options for meeting its identified need for development. This requires demonstrating that the strategy:

- a) makes as much use as possible of suitable brownfield sites and underutilised land;
- b) optimises the density of development in line with the policies in chapter 11 of the NPPF, including whether policies promote a significant uplift in minimum density standards in town and city centres and other locations well served by public transport; and
- c) has been informed by discussions with neighbouring authorities about whether they could accommodate some of the identified need for development, as demonstrated through the statement of common ground.

3.3 Paragraph 147 (NPPF, 2023) states that:

“When drawing up or reviewing Green Belt boundaries, the need to promote sustainable patterns of development should be taken into account. Strategic policy making authorities should consider the consequences for sustainable development of channelling development towards urban areas inside the Green Belt boundary, towards towns and villages inset within the Green Belt or towards locations beyond the outer Green Belt boundary. Where it has been concluded that it is necessary to release Green Belt land for development, plans should give first consideration to land which has been previously-developed and /or is well-served by public transport. They should also set out ways in which the impact of removing land from the Green Belt can be offset through compensatory improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of remaining Green Belt land.”

Legal Cases

3.4 Whilst there is no definition of what constitutes exceptional circumstances in national policy, it has been considered by several recent legal cases.

3.5 In the case of *Calverton Parish Council v Nottingham City Council, Broxtowe Borough Council and Gedling Borough Council*¹, the judgement set out several matters that should be identified and dealt with to ascertain whether exceptional circumstances exist to justify altering a Green Belt boundary, as follows:

¹ [Calverton Parish Council v Nottingham City Council & Ors \[2015\] EWHC 1078](#)

- 1) the acuteness / intensity of the objectively assessed need;
- 2) the inherent constraints on supply / availability of land prima facie suitable for sustainable development;
- 3) the consequent difficulties in achieving sustainable development without impinging on the Green Belt;
- 4) the nature and extent of harm to the Green Belt (or those parts of it which would be lost if the boundaries were reviewed); and
- 5) the extent to which the consequent impacts on the purposes of the Green Belt may be ameliorated or reduced to the lowest reasonably practicable extent.

3.6 In the more recent Guildford judgment², the key points arising from the judgment which relate to 'exceptional circumstances' were as follows:

1. This is a matter primarily for the decision-maker
2. The judicial emphasis is very much more on assessing the rationality of the judgement rather than providing a definition or criteria. The checklist set out in the Calverton decision is not a checklist and nor is it exhaustive
3. The test is expressed in deliberately broad terms
4. Exceptional circumstances do not connote 'rarity'
5. General planning needs, such as ordinary housing, are not precluded from its scope
6. Exceptional circumstances can be found in the accumulation of circumstances, not each of which has to itself be exceptional

² Compton PC, Ockham PC & Cranwell v Guildford BC, SSHLG [2019] EWHC 3242

4. Inspectors' views on Green Belt

- 4.1 Local Plan Inspector's Reports which consider the issue of Green Belt provide additional context and guidance for undertaking a study of the Green Belt. An analysis of relevant Inspector's reports is useful to understand the context of how Green Belt policy is being interpreted and specifically, to clarify in further detail what exceptional circumstances can comprise.
- 4.2 The Inspector's report for Harrogate Local Plan was published in January 2020. Neighbouring former Harrogate Borough Council is similarly impacted by both the West Yorkshire and York Green Belts. The Council was successful in demonstrating that it can fully meet its housing and employment needs without infringing on the Green Belt. The Inspector was satisfied that there was no obligation to undertake a Green Belt review in the circumstances where there were sufficient suitable sites available outside the Green Belt to accommodate the level of housing (notwithstanding the need for gypsy and traveller sites) and employment land required over the plan period.
- 4.3 Other Inspectors' Reports provide important insight on the need to promote sustainable patterns of development, in line with NPPF (2023) para 147. For example, the Inspectors' report for Lichfield's Local Plan was published in January 2015, following a suspension of the examination to allow the Council to find additional land to meet its unmet need. The report found that there was no justification in the Framework or Planning Guidance for the proposition that Green Belt should only be released as a last resort and that this would be to accept that sustainability is the servant of Green Belt designation. Instead, it confirmed that the duty in determining Green Belt is to take account of the need to promote sustainable patterns of development.
- 4.4 This was a view that an aggrieved landowner sought and failed to challenge at the Plan's adoption via Judicial Review. The judge reinforced the Inspector's reasoning concluding that:
- "...the additional sites selected by the Council are in Green Belt and land should be released from the Green Belt only in exceptional circumstances. In my judgement the lack of more sustainable sites outside the Green Belt to meet the identified need for housing in a way that is consistent with the Plan's urban and key centre strategy amounts, in this instance, to the exceptional circumstances that justify the release of Green Belt land..."*
- 4.5 The Inspector's report for the Wyre Borough Local Plan demonstrates that if the plan's spatial strategy is to focus development on the most sustainable settlements, and to do so Green Belt land needs to be released, this is a relevant exceptional circumstance. In the case of this plan, land was removed from the Green Belt at Poulton le Fylde, the largest settlement in the borough, to support the Borough's spatial strategy.
- 4.6 The issue of Green Belt and specifically whether there should be a review or localised review, was one of the matters and issues debated at the Selby District Core Strategy Local Plan Examination in Public between 2011 and 2013. The Inspector recommended the inclusion of a policy on the Green Belt to give strategic guidance to any Green Belt review necessary at the subsequent Site Allocations Local Plan (SALP). Whilst the Council has since amended its Local Development Scheme to not progress a Site Allocations Local Plan but instead prepare a new Local Plan, the issues remain relevant, and the Inspector's Report (June 2013) provides useful context and commentary.

- 4.7 The Inspector dealt with Green Belt at Paragraphs 49 to 52 of his report. He stated that:
- “Some objectors argue that the plan should be more positive and definitive by stating that a Green Belt review will take place. But that would predetermine a decision which should properly be taken at SALP stage when land allocations to meet the housing and employment requirements will be made. Given the importance of protecting the Green Belt, decisions about localised boundary reviews should only be taken if and when it is established beyond doubt that the exceptional circumstances necessary to justify Green Belt releases exist.”* And *“The counter argument is that no Green Belt releases should be contemplated because there will always be sufficient developable land available in sustainable locations outside the Green Belt. Again, those decisions are best left for the SALP, where the benefits of growth which is needed to sustain a particular Green Belt settlement can be balanced against growth in a non-Green Belt location which would do little to sustain the Green Belt settlement in question.”*

5. Evaluation of exceptional circumstances in the Plan Area

5.1 Given there is no standard assessment to determine whether exceptional circumstances exist, the following factors have been considered:

- The need for employment land
- The need for homes
- The need for gypsies and travellers
- Land Availability Assessments – Key Physical constraints
- Land availability for employment and homes
- Land Availability for gypsies and travellers
- Safeguarded Land
- Sustainable patterns of development

Need for employment land.

5.2 The Council has undertaken a Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA) (2020) to inform the former district area’s employment land requirement during the period to 2040. The 2022 Addendum to the HEDNA finds that the former district has the potential to deliver around 12,312 full time equivalent jobs over the plan period, based on commitments and proposed allocations which translate to a minimum of 91.2ha of employment land that should be delivered, during the period to 2040, as set out below:

Table 2: Need for employment land.

Use Class	Recommended floorspace (sq m)	Recommended land (ha)
B1 a/b	10,880	3.6
B1 c, B2 & B8	306,660	87.6
Total	317,540	91.2

5.3 There is therefore sufficient supply of employment land to meet demand within the Local Plan period. In addition, the Council recognises that there are also key remaining opportunities for the redevelopment of Olympia Park, Gascoigne Wood Interchange and part of Eggborough Power Station which represent strategic brownfield sites with unique rail infrastructure and but are not subject to a current planning consent. All these sites are located beyond the Green Belt and have potential to make significant contribution to employment land supply.

Need for homes.

5.4 Under the Government’s current standard methodology (December 2022), the minimum annual housing requirement for the former district is 333 dwellings per annum. However, the HEDNA has also considered future development needs to ensure that the relationship between housing and employment growth has been satisfactorily addressed.

5.5 The 2022 HEDNA Addendum identifies the potential to deliver around 12,312 full time equivalent jobs over the plan period, based on commitments and proposed allocations on the land set out in the above table, and concludes that a higher housing figure of 368

dwellings per annum, which although considered to be overly optimistic, would reflect the delivery of the proposed strategic sites and non-allocated employment potential within the Plan Area. To provide sufficient flexibility to respond to changes in the economy and therefore through an adequate available workforce the Local Plan has allocated sufficient housing land to meet this higher economic led requirement.

- 5.6 A further buffer of 5% has been added to the minimum requirement to provide flexibility and an over-supply of housing sites. This is to ensure that sufficient housing is delivered, even in the unforeseen circumstances where some sites do not come forward for development. This equates to 386 dwellings per annum with the buffer applied. Over the plan period, between 2020 and 2040, a total of 7,728 new dwellings will be required. Existing commitments and completions have been deducted as set out in Table 3 below, which means that the plan must allocate sufficient sites to deliver 4,975 new homes over the plan period.

Table 3: Need for homes.

Source	Number of dwellings
A: Housing requirement	7,728
B: Net commitments at 31 March 2023	1,328
C: Net completions between 1 April 2020 & 31 March 2023	1,425
Minimum requirement to allocate A-(B+C)	4,975

- 5.7 The former Selby District Council and its neighbouring authorities which comprise the Leeds City Region have previously agreed that all authorities are planning for their own development needs within their own Local Authority Boundaries, as set out in the Leeds City Region Statement of Common Ground (March 2020)³. Only Doncaster, as neighbouring authority, has previously approached the Council about potentially accommodating some of their housing development needs. This discussion concluded that Selby District Council were not in the position to plan for any additional development needs. On this basis, there are no additional housing land requirements which need to be planned for.

Need of gypsies and travellers

- 5.8 Consultants ORS undertook a survey of gypsy and traveller pitches in the District in March 2018 and the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) was published in May 2018. The study calculates the need for additional pitches and is broken down as follows:
- 5.9 Since the GTAA was published, the former Selby district Council has considered two planning applications for gypsy and traveller pitches, at the Small Holdings in Kellington and at South Milford Caravan Park, Old Great North Road, Newthorpe. As part of negotiations on these applications, the authority agreed to an updated figure of 21 pitches for the Plan Area.
- 5.10 The updated need figure of 21 pitches was quoted in the reports for Planning Committee for both the South Milford Caravan Park and Kellington planning applications, where much of this need was identified as being “required immediately”.

³ [Leeds City Region Statement of Common Ground \(March 2020\) Agreed at meeting of West Yorkshire Combined Authority Friday 4th Sept 2020 - Item 11 - Appendix 1](#)

- 5.11 The former Selby district Council gave permanent consent for 8 pitches at The Small Holdings, Kellington in May 2020, along with temporary consent for 12 pitches at South Milford Caravan Park, Newthorpe in June 2020.
- 5.12 As part of Local Government Reorganisation, the former Selby District Council was subsumed into a much larger Local Authority on 1st April 2023, covering the whole of North Yorkshire (excluding City of York Council Unitary Authority). North Yorkshire Council is required to prepare a new Local Plan for the new geography which must be adopted within 5 years of the reorganisation. This new Local Plan will need to be underpinned by relevant and up-to-date evidence, including an assessment of the need for gypsy and traveller pitches across the wider North Yorkshire geography and this piece of work has been identified as a priority.

Land Availability Assessments – Key Physical constraints

- 5.13 The Site Assessment Methodology⁴ has been prepared to support the Local Plan and has been produced to assess the suitability of land for allocation in the plan. The document helps to identify which sites are the most sustainable, financially viable and deliverable as well as informing decisions on which sites should be allocated in the plan.
- 5.14 The first stage of site selection comprises an initial sift to remove sites which are below the windfall threshold or have a significant constraint to development. The physical constraints considered under Stage 1 are as follows:
- Flood risk
 - Protected habitats
 - Health Safety Executive Zones
 - Scheduled ancient monuments
- 5.9 The former district's low-lying topography and extensive network of broad, tidal rivers render a large area of the former district vulnerable to flooding and much of the low-lying areas fall within Flood Zones 3 or 2. The NPPF requires that all plans should apply a sequential, risk-based approach to the location of development, considering the current and future impacts of climate change. Any sites located fully within Flood Zone 3 have failed the initial sift, whilst any sites partially within Flood Zone 3 will only have those parts of the site considered for water-compatible uses only (such as amenity space).
- 5.11 If the site is situated fully within a protected habitat, it has been excluded in the initial sift. The former district has several such designations, including 12 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), 3 Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), 1 Special Protection Area (SPA), 1 RAMSAR site, 2 National Nature Reserves and 108 parcels of ancient woodland.
- 5.12 The locations of Health Safety Executive (HSE) Zones have been considered and if a site is fully within an HSE Inner Zone it has been excluded for residential use, based on the HSE's land use planning methodology which advises against residential development in Inner Zones, but notes that employment uses could be acceptable.
- 5.13 Heritage assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, have been considered a major constraint to development and if a site falls directly on top of a Scheduled Ancient Monument it fails the initial sift.

⁴ [Site Assessment Methodology \(March 2024\)](#)

- 5.14 These constraints provide a logical starting point in considering spatial growth options for the Plan. The spatial strategy has sought to preserve special areas of ecological and historical importance and steer development away from those areas at the highest risk of flooding.

Land availability for employment and homes

- 5.15 To date, a total of 464 sites for development have been submitted as part of the Local Plan 'Call for Sites', 330 of which lie entirely beyond the established Green Belt limits, and 8 partially. The sustainability, viability and deliverability of these sites have been assessed through the Site Assessment Methodology, as detailed above.
- 5.16 Of the sites which are not within the currently established limits of the Green Belt, 308 have been identified as passing the initial sift, i.e., not having an absolute constraint to development. Of these sites, it has been estimated that they could provide a total of 1,300ha of employment land and over 32,000 dwellings. Some of these sites are on land allocated as Safeguarded in previously adopted plans for the district.
- 5.17 This demonstrates that there is potentially sufficient available land for residential and employment development outside the Green Belt with the capacity to far exceed the district's objectively assessed needs within the plan period for 4,975 homes and 91 Ha of employment land.

Land availability for Gypsies and Travellers

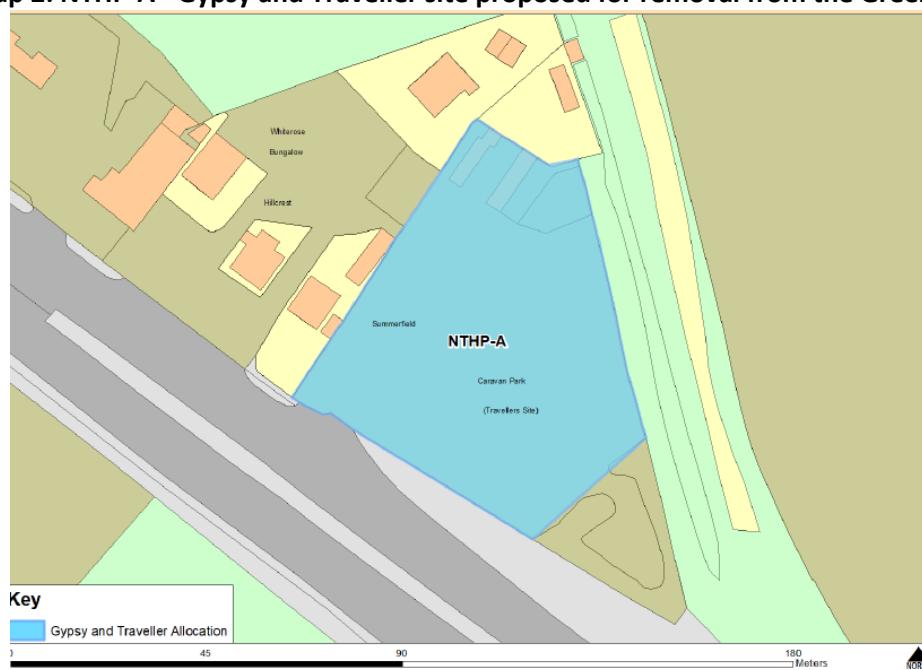
- 5.18 In terms of land to meet Gypsy and traveller needs, a willing landowner is required to be able to allocate sites. As part of the Call for Sites exercise associated with the emerging Local Plan, only two sites were proposed specifically for gypsy and traveller use – CLIF-P and NTHP-A.
- 5.19 Site CLIF-P comprises of land in an area of medium flood risk (Flood Zone 2) along with a small part of land which is at a high risk of flooding (Flood Zone 3). The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) considers caravans, mobile homes and park homes intended for permanent residential use to be highly vulnerable uses and the site was therefore not thought suitable for Gypsies and travellers.
- 5.20 Site NTHP-A is situated in the Green Belt. Only one representation was received to proposed allocation NTHP-A as part of consultation on the Publication Draft Local Plan (2022) which was in support of the proposal. The site is under 0.5 hectares in size and has been used as a gypsy site since approximately 2010, both unlawfully and lawfully under a temporary consent granted at appeal⁵ and more recently by the current temporary planning permission which expires in June 2025. The site's status as previously developed land was established as part of the appeal decision where it's previous use for HGV parking was determined as the lawful fall-back position for the site.
- 5.21 Policy E of PPTS provides guidance that traveller sites are inappropriate development in the Green Belt which should not be approved, except in very special circumstances. However, paragraph 17 of PPTS allows for an exceptional, limited alteration to the defined Green Belt boundary (which might be to accommodate a site inset within the Green Belt) to meet a specific, identified need for a traveller site. This should be done so only through the plan-

⁵ ref. APP/N2739/A/11/2158757

making process and not in response to a planning application and was successfully undertaken by the former Harrogate Borough Council who removed several gypsy sites from the Green Belt through their Local Plan process to regularise these existing sites. Their Local Plan was adopted in March 2020.

- 5.22 Paragraph 26 confirms that weight should be attached to the effective use of previously developed, untidy or derelict land and those sites that are well planned or soft landscaped in such a way to positively enhance the environment or increase its openness.
- 5.23 The site is privately owned, well established and managed, and provides a settled base for existing families who can access nearby education, health, employment, and welfare infrastructure. Evidence was submitted as part of the previous planning application demonstrating that all households on site meet the PPTS definition. The site has had recent investment to tidy it up and provide a more attractive environment. Despite the longstanding existence of this gypsy site and investment in it, it has been unable to gain permanent planning permission due to its location in the Green Belt.
- 5.24 The Council is seeking the permanent removal of South Milford Caravan Park from the Green Belt through the emerging Local Plan and consider that in doing so the immediate need for 21 pitches would be broadly met when considered in conjunction with the permission granted for 8 pitches at the Small Holdings in Kellington. The boundary of the proposed NTHP-A allocation is tightly drawn around the existing site to prevent any further expansion, and defining the Green Belt limits in this way offers greater control and permanence to the Green Belt.

Map 2: NTHP-A - Gypsy and Traveller site proposed for removal from the Green Belt



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- 5.25 In summary, removal of the existing Gypsy and traveller site from the Green Belt is supported by national policy and will meet a specific need generated from this existing site.

Safeguarded land

- 5.26 Safeguarded land is land between the Green Belt and Urban areas which has been removed from the Green Belt and reserved to meet development needs beyond a Plan period, thereby ensuring the permanence of the Green Belt. Safeguarded Land at the point of designation is not allocated for development and should only come forward, if required, following a review of the Local Plan.
- 5.27 When the detailed boundaries of the Green Belt were established for the first time, in the 2005 Selby District Local Plan⁶ (SDLP), 6 parcels of Safeguarded Land (51.5 ha) were designated. These were primarily adjacent to the settlement of Sherburn-in-Elmet with one site adjacent to the village of Hillam.
- 5.28 The Safeguarded Land Background Paper⁷ considers the status of the saved SDLP safeguarded land policies and allocations. It establishes where these allocations have now been developed as residential sites and are therefore no longer available. Where there is remaining undeveloped safeguarded land, the paper goes on to assess where these have been put forward for development by willing land owners and are suitable through the land availability assessments set out above, where they may be suitable in the future but have not currently been proposed in a way the emerging Local plan can support and should be saved for future consideration, and finally those sites where there is no reasonable prospect of the land ever coming forward. In the latter case these sites are proposed for removal as safeguarded land as they are unable to meet future development needs.
- 5.29 In summary, of the 51.5 ha of saved Safeguarded Land, the emerging Local Plan proposes that:
- 19.74 ha has already been developed or has outstanding planning consent.
-sites East and West of Hodgsons Lane in Sherburn in Elmet
 - 22.63 ha to be allocated for residential development through the Local Plan
-20.1 ha at Prospect Farm Sherburn in Elmet and 2.53ha adjacent to Hillam
 - 8.96 ha to be retained as Safeguarded land for the future
-Garden Lane and West of Hodgsons lane – adjacent to Sherburn-in-Elmet
 - 0.17 ha to be deleted, as there is not realistic prospect of this being brought forward
-Part of the land identified at Hillam
- 5.30 The approach taken ensures that where appropriate the formerly safeguarded land serves the purpose it was intended for, by meeting some of the longer-term development needs of the former district. Retaining some elements of safeguarded land further ensure the permanence of the Green Belt beyond this plan period.

Sustainable patterns of development

- 5.31 An important consideration is whether the proposed spatial strategy promotes sustainable patterns of development. Paragraph 109 of the NPPF (2023) requires that significant development should be focussed on those locations which are or can be made sustainable, and paragraph 147 is clear that when drawing up or reviewing Green Belt boundaries sustainable patterns of development should be taken into consideration.

⁶ Selby District Local Plan (Adopted 2005)

⁷ Background Paper 7: Safeguarded Land March 2024

- 5.32 In determining the spatial approach, a detailed analysis of the sustainability and capacity for further growth of each of the former district's settlements was undertaken as set out in the Settlement Hierarchy Paper⁸ and underpinned by the Sustainability Appraisal which has informed the proposed approach. Selby Town is the main urban area within the former district. It is the most sustainable settlement and is unconstrained by Green Belt. However, the District's two Local Service Centres – Tadcaster and Sherburn in Elmet – are both impacted by the West Yorkshire Green Belt. Sherburn in Elmet is located inset in the Green Belt, and Tadcaster borders the Green Belt on the town's western side. There are also a range of other villages organised into tier 1 and Tier 2 settlements which are well served by services and can be considered sustainable. Those which are under the control of Green Belt designations are listed in Table 1.
- 5.33 The Spatial Strategy Background Paper⁹ sets out how the proposed spatial approach has been developed. This has included considering the removal of Green Belt land to support growth in sustainable locations, under spatial option E. This option sought to focus development adjacent to the Plan Areas two Local Service Centres, in Tadcaster and Sherburn in Elmet. However, such an approach is only acceptable in exceptional circumstances, in line with national policy. As set out in paragraphs 5.15 to 5.17 above there are adequate available sites located elsewhere in the district without the need to release this land, and so exceptional circumstances would only apply if doing so would be the most sustainable option for the plan.
- 5.34 As summarised above, most of the safeguarded land identified in 2005 was located adjacent to Sherburn in Elmet. The development of some of this has contributed to the recent significant levels of growth referenced in the Spatial Strategy Background Paper. The remaining saved Safeguarded Land in Sherburn has also been maximised to identify further allocation in Sherburn through the emerging Local plan, allowing this settlement to continue to grow without the need to release land from the Green Belt.
- 5.35 Also set out in the Spatial Strategy Paper is how the Green Belt contributes to the context and setting of the Local service Centre at Tadcaster, a town which has seen persistent under delivery on its existing brownfield and derelict sites. These issues suggest significant Green Belt release could have a negative impact on Tadcaster, as it would be contrary to the purpose of Green Belt in assisting in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land (NPPF 20203 para 143).
- 5.36 Following the consideration of several options, as set out in the Spatial Strategy Background Paper, it has been concluded that a strategy which focuses development on the Principal Town of Selby, alongside an urban extension to Eggborough provides the most sustainable option. The chosen spatial option maximises the potential of brownfield sites and still directs development to the most sustainable settlements, comprising Selby, and to a lesser extent Tadcaster and Sherburn in Elmet, which have access to a range of employment opportunities; services and facilities; and good public transport linkages, while also supporting some smaller settlements which require growth. It demonstrates that the housing and employment needs of the plan area can be fully met in a sustainable way without infringing on the Green Belt.

⁸ Background Paper 2: Settlement Hierarchy March 2024

⁹ Background Paper 1: Spatial Strategy March 2024

- 5.37 The Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Report¹⁰ also concludes that the preferred spatial strategy provides the most sustainable option, as the levels of development can be supported without significant harm to existing communities and their local services. In the absence of the urban expansion at Eggborough, it would be necessary to significantly increase development in existing settlements, which would require improvements to existing infrastructure and could have adverse impacts on the character and form of settlements.
- 5.38 All sites submitted through the Call for Sites process have been assessed by the Site Assessment Methodology which has integrated the Sustainability Appraisal process by the considering the Sustainability Appraisal Framework as part of the site selection criteria. This approach ensures that the Sustainability Appraisal is an inherent part of the site assessment process.

¹⁰ Strategic Environmental Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal (March 2024) AECOM

6. Conclusions

- 6.1 The proposed spatial strategy seeks to fully meet housing and employment needs through a sustainable pattern of development without infringing on the Green Belt. It does this through maximising formerly safeguarded land while also retaining some to further ensure the permanence of the Green Belt.
- 6.2 As there are sufficient sites which are available, viable and sustainable outside the Green Belt to accommodate the level of housing and employment land required in the period to 2040, there is no obligation to undertake Stages 2 and 3 of the Green Belt Review.
- 6.2 There is however a need to address immediate gypsy and traveller needs which can be met in the short term through the release of land at Milford Caravan Park identified within the emerging local plan as site NTHP-A. As this is the only reasonable site for such purposes submitted through the Local Plan and the site has been in this existing use for an extensive amount of time, the approach would be in line with guidance and this change is considered reasonable.
- 6.4 In addition, the Green Belt boundaries within the plan area were adopted almost 20 years ago. Opportunities to consider any cartographic errors, anomalies, or recent development along the edge of settlements that have taken place since the boundary was last drawn are set out in a Minor Green Belt Boundary Amendments paper¹¹. The intention of these changes is to make the boundary more logical and defensible, rather than to release land to accommodate new development.

¹¹ Background Paper 6: Approach to the Green Belt (Minor Amends) (March 2024)