



Rural Development Supplementary Planning Document



Adopted April 2024



**City of
Doncaster
Council**

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1. Introduction

1.1. Purpose of the Document

- 1.1.1. This SPD has been prepared to clarify the expectations of the Council with regards to development in Doncaster's countryside; be it in either the Local Plan defined 'Countryside Policy Area (CPA)' or 'Green Belt'.
- 1.1.2. For development in the CPA it supports Local Plan [Policy 1 Part 5](#), [Policy 8](#), [Policy 11](#) and [Policy 25](#); and relevant policy in the [National Planning Policy Framework \(NPPF¹\)](#) – see [Section 3](#).
- 1.1.3. For development in the Green Belt, it elaborates on localised interpretation of national Green Belt policy contained within the NPPF, which the Local Plan defers to for such proposals – see [Section 4](#).
- 1.1.4. Some of the guidance in [Section 3](#) is also applicable within the Green Belt – [Section 4](#) clarifies which is.

1.2. What is difference between 'Countryside Policy Area' and 'Green Belt' in Doncaster?

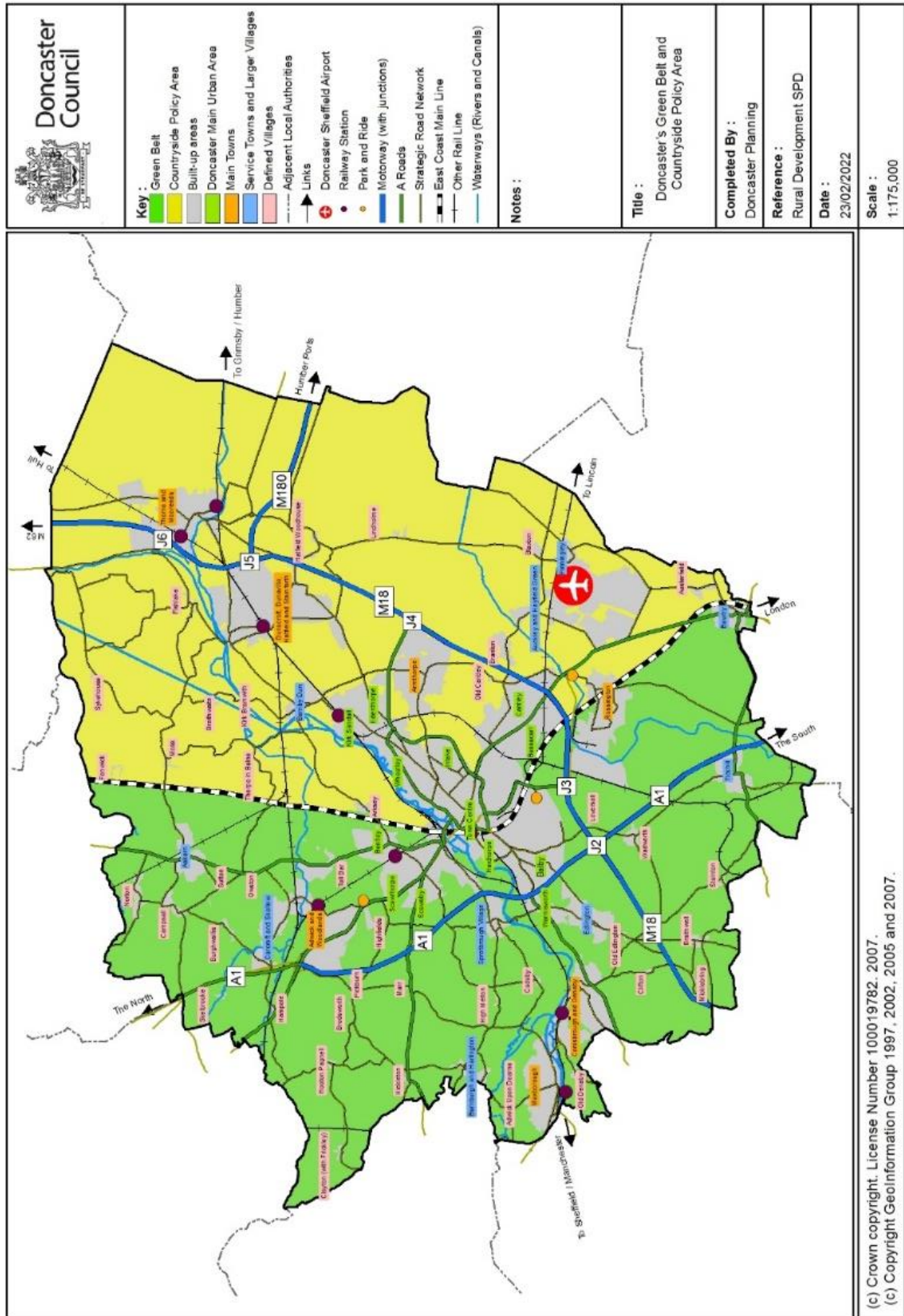
- 1.2.1. Policy 1 of the Local Plan sets out the spatial strategy for the City². In Doncaster, the Local Plan [Policies Map](#) clearly defines 58 settlements (the Main Urban Area; 7 Main Towns; 10 Service Towns and Villages; and 40 Defined Villages). Land outside of these settlements largely either constitutes 'Green Belt' (to the west of the Borough) or 'Countryside Policy Area' (to the east of the Borough), roughly delineated by the East Coast Mainline; although some areas may have other designations, such as open space, minerals, or Gypsy and Traveller sites³.
- 1.2.2. Development in the Countryside Policy Area is primarily judged against [Policy 25](#) of the Local Plan. For development in the Green Belt, Policy 1 of the Local Plan defers to national policy (NPPF paragraphs 142 – 156); although some NPPF countryside policy also relates to Green Belt.
- 1.2.3. [Figure 1](#) below summarises the general extent of the Green Belt and Countryside Policy Area in the City. Exact boundaries are shown on the Local Plan's [Policies Map](#).

¹ At the time of writing this was the version published on 19 December 2023. The Council intends to update this SPD following any subsequent changes to the NPPF where changes are not substantive (e.g. to reflect paragraph numbering changes) without further consultation.

² Since Local Plan adoption, City status has been granted to the former Borough; this SPD's references to 'City' can be taken as meaning 'Borough' in the Local Plan document.

³ Authorised Gypsy and Traveller sites in the Green Belt were removed from the Green Belt through the Local Plan. See 4.7.10

Figure 1 : Extent of Countryside Policy Area and Green Belt in Doncaster



2. National and Local Policy

2.1. National Policy (and [Planning Practice Guidance](#))

2.1.1. The NPPF contains various policy relevant to rural development proposals in the countryside, be it designated as Green Belt or not. However, Green Belt policy takes precedence – i.e. proposals *in* the Green Belt which are consistent with NPPF countryside policy must also be consistent with NPPF Green Belt policy. Put simply, there is a stricter level of control over new development in the Green Belt than other countryside.

NPPF Countryside Policy

2.1.2. [NPPF paragraphs 82 – 84](#) relate to **rural housing**.

- [Paragraph 82](#) supports sustainable development that reflect local circumstances and housing needs including the delivery of **rural exception sites** (supplemented by specific Planning Practice Guidance).
- [Paragraph 83](#) states that to **promote sustainable development in rural areas**, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. This is primarily policy to guide Local Plan preparation – it helped inform the Local Plan’s spatial strategy and settlement hierarchy (Policy 1) and [Policy 25](#).
- [Paragraph 84](#) states that decisions should **avoid isolated homes** in the countryside, subject to some **limited exceptions**; namely:
 - (a) there is an essential need for a rural worker, including those taking majority control of a farm business, to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside;
 - (b) the development would represent the **optimal viable use of a heritage asset** **or** would be **appropriate enabling development** to secure the future of heritage assets;
 - (c) the development would **re-use redundant or disused buildings** and enhance its immediate setting;
 - (d) the development would involve the **subdivision** of an **existing residential building**; or
 - (e) the **design** is of **exceptional quality**, in that it:
 - **is truly outstanding, reflecting the highest standards in architecture, and would help to raise standards of design more generally in rural areas; and**
 - **would significantly enhance its immediate setting, and be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area.**

- 2.1.3. [Paragraphs 88 and 89](#) of the NPPF are aimed at ‘**supporting a prosperous rural economy**’.
- [Paragraph 88](#) enables
 - (a) the **sustainable growth and expansion of businesses** in rural areas via conversion of existing buildings as well as well-designed new buildings;
 - (b) development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;
 - (c) sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments; and
 - (d) supporting retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities.
 - [Paragraph 89](#) requires that planning decision recognise that **sites** to meet local business and community needs in rural areas **may** have to be found on **land adjacent to or beyond existing settlements; and in locations that are not well served by public transport**. The use of **previously developed land and sites which are physically well-related to existing settlements is encouraged**.
- 2.1.4. [Paragraph 180](#) requires that planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the **natural and local environment**, including:
- (a) by **protecting and enhancing valued landscapes** ... (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the Local Plan)
 - (b) by **recognising the intrinsic character and beauty** of the countryside.
- 2.1.5. Separate to the NPPF, national [Planning Policy for Traveller Sites](#) (PPTS) set out how applications for **Gypsy, Traveller or Travelling Showpeople sites** in the Countryside Policy Area and Green Belt should be assessed.

NPPF Green Belt Policy

- 2.1.6. National Green Belt policy is given in [NPPF Chapter 13](#).
- [Paragraph 142](#) stresses the great importance Government attaches to **Green Belts**, whose **fundamental aim** is to prevent urban sprawl by **keeping land permanently open**; their essential characteristics being their “openness and permanence”. [Planning Practice Guidance considers further how to assess impact on Green Belt openness](#).
 - [Paragraph 143](#) gives the **5 purposes of Green Belt**; namely (a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas; (b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another; (c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from

encroachment; (d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and (e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

- [Paragraph 152](#) – **Inappropriate development** is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in **very special circumstances**.

- [Paragraph 153](#) – Substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. **‘Very special circumstances’ will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt** by reason of inappropriateness, and **any other harm** resulting from the proposal, **is clearly outweighed by other considerations**.

- [Paragraph 154](#) – **New buildings are inappropriate in the Green Belt, except for:**

(a) buildings for agriculture and forestry;

(b) the provision of **appropriate facilities** (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;

(c) the **extension or alteration of a building** provided that it does not result in **disproportionate additions** over and above the size of the original building;

(d) the **replacement of a building**, provided the new building is in the **same use** and **not materially larger** than the one it replaces;

(e) limited infilling in villages;

(f) **limited affordable housing** for local community needs under **policies set out in the development plan** (including policies for rural exception sites); and

(g) **limited infilling** or the partial or complete **redevelopment of previously developed land**, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would:

- **not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development; or**
- **not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt, where the development would re-use previously developed land and contribute to meeting an identified affordable housing need within the area of the local planning authority.**

- [Paragraph 155](#) - Certain **other** forms of **development** are **also not inappropriate** in the Green Belt provided they **preserve** its *openness* and **do not conflict with the purposes** of including land within it:

(a) **mineral** extraction;

- (b) engineering operations;
- (c) **local transport infrastructure** which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location;
- (d) the **re-use of buildings** provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction;
- (e) **material changes in the use of land (such as** changes of use for outdoor sport or recreation, or for cemeteries and burial grounds); and
- (f) development, including buildings, brought forward under a Community Right to Build Order or Neighbourhood Development Order.

[Paragraph 156](#) – **elements** of many Green Belt **renewable energy projects** will comprise **inappropriate development**. In such cases developers will need to demonstrate **very special circumstances** if projects are to proceed. Such very special circumstances **may include** the **wider environmental benefits associated with increased production of energy from renewable sources**.

2.2. Local Policy

- 2.2.1. The Local Plan does not repeat national [NPPF Green Belt policy](#). This is confirmed in **Local Plan Policy 1**, Part 6.
- 2.2.2. Local Plan Policy 1 sets out the City’s Spatial Strategy and defines its settlements by grouping. It also defines where the Countryside Policy Area is, and states that development in this area must be in accordance with Policy 25, except in the case of a failure to demonstrate a deliverable five year housing land supply, whereby Policy 1 [sets out policy](#) for assessing residential development in the Countryside Policy Area in these circumstances.
- 2.2.3. **Policy 25** sets out the approach to development in the Countryside Policy Area, specifically covering:
 - [Part 1, the re-use and conversion of buildings](#);
 - [Part 2, replacement dwellings and extensions to existing dwellings](#);
 - [Part 3, new dwellings](#) (including for [rural workers dwellings](#); [‘entry level’ and rural exception sites](#); and [isolated dwellings of exceptional design quality](#)); and
 - [Part 4, new non-residential development](#).
- 2.2.4. **Policy 8** relates to the process for the [removal of occupancy conditions](#) across the City, which may mean conditions limiting occupancy of a dwelling to a rural worker. It applies in both the Countryside Policy Area and Green Belt.
- 2.2.5. **Policy 11** is the local interpretation of the national [Planning Policy for Traveller Sites](#) (PPTS) and set out how applications for Gypsy, Traveller or Travelling Showpeople sites in the [Countryside Policy Area](#) and [Green Belt](#) should be assessed.

2.2.6. **Other Policies.** The Local Plan includes a number of other policies that may be used to help determine development proposals in the countryside. These include (non-exhaustive list):

- **Policy 33 (Landscape):** is the local interpretation of NPPF policy including paragraphs 20, 135, 150, 158, 160 and 180. Development in the countryside has potential to harm its intrinsic character and beauty; but also the potential to conserve, enhance and restore the quality and local distinctiveness of Doncaster's landscape character areas and its individual landscape features. The policy should be read in conjunction with, and development proposals be informed by, Doncaster's [Landscape Character and Capacity Study 2007](#) (supplemented by more up to date analysis as necessary). Where development proposals will most likely result in a significant impact on the Borough's landscape, the proposals should assess the potential impact (including cumulative impact) through the submission of a [Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment](#) (LVIA) and explain how it proposes any negative effects (including cumulative from committed developments) will be minimised. The LVIA will require the input of a suitably qualified (and unbiased⁴) advisor paid for by the applicant. The validation of any LVIA should be made via independent verification at the applicant's expense.
- **Policy 41 (Character and Local Distinctiveness):** informs development proposals seeking to ensure they recognise and reinforce the character of local landscapes and building traditions; respond positively to their context, setting and existing site features, as well as respecting and enhancing the character of the locality. Developments will be expected to integrate visually and functionally with the immediate and surrounding area.
- **Policy 44: Residential Design:** sets out specific design requirements residential developments.
- **Policy 46: Design of Non-Residential, Commercial and Employment Developments (Strategic Policy):** sets out specific design requirements in relation to non-residential and commercial developments, including, but not limited to, employment buildings, retail developments, leisure facilities, education facilities, community buildings, and mixed use proposals.
- **Policy 48 (Landscaping of New Developments):** informs development proposals seeking to ensure they protect landscape character, protect and enhance existing landscape features, and provide high quality and comprehensive hard and soft landscape schemes.

⁴ Whilst the Council cannot insist on a truly independent assessment, less weight will be given to assessments which are clearly so biased in favour of an application to make it inappropriate to informing planning decisions. The Council may choose to commission its own assessment, paid for by the applicant.

3. Development in the Countryside Policy Area

3.1. Introduction

3.1.1. This section gives guidance on the implementation of Doncaster's Local Plan policies for the Countryside Policy Area including the four parts of Policy 25, consideration of ['fallback' permitted development](#), the removal of [occupancy conditions from rural worker dwellings](#), proposals for [gypsy, traveller and travelling showpeople development](#); and for [equestrian development](#).

3.1.2. [NPPF paragraphs 82 – 84](#) seek to prevent the delivery of isolated dwellings in the countryside, although there are some exceptions. **Local Plan Policy 25** elaborates on this and supports development in the Countryside Policy Area* for four broad reasons:

- [Policy 25, Part 1: Re-use and Conversion of Buildings](#)
- [Policy 25, Part 2: Replacement of a Dwelling and Extensions to Existing Dwellings](#)
- [Policy 25, Part 3: New Dwellings](#)
- [Policy 25, Part 4: New Non-Residential Development](#)

* **Policy 25 does not directly apply to proposals in the Green Belt.** In the Green Belt, NPPF Green Belt policy applies – see [Section 4 - Development in the Green Belt](#) (which explains the stricter policy requirements that operate in Green Belt areas). Where policy principles in Policy 25 do apply to Green Belt proposals, these are fully explained in [Section 4](#).

3.1.3. For consideration of ['Fall-back' Permitted Development](#) (where an applicant may wish to argue that, because ['Permitted Development Rights'](#) exist, certain development, which may not otherwise be acceptable, should be approved as being preferable to what *could* be developed under permitted development), see Section 3.6.

3.2. Policy 25, Part 1: Re-use and Conversion of Buildings

3.2.1. Certain agricultural to residential development falls under Class Q of the [Town and Country Planning Permitted Development Order \(2015\) \(as amended\)](#). However, please note that [case law](#)⁵ has established that not all agricultural buildings are capable of being converted to residential development under Class Q by virtue of them simply being 'agricultural'. National planning practice guidance is available for [permitted development rights for the change of use of agricultural buildings](#).

3.2.2. Where proposals are not permitted development, planning permission is required. Local Plan Policy 25, Part 1, is supportive of appropriate proposals to bring back into use rural buildings which are redundant or no longer suitable for their original

⁵ [Hibbitt & Anor v Secretary of State for Communities & Local Government & Ors \[2016\] EWHC 2853 \(Admin\) \(09 November 2016\) \(bailii.org\)](#)

purpose where they safeguard the building's future and enhance the immediate setting; and provided all of its 6 criteria (A to F) are satisfied, as below.

A) the original building is of **permanent construction, structurally sound** (demonstrated by an **appropriate structural assessment**) and **suitable for conversion without significant works, extension or alteration** (demonstrated by an **appropriate conversion method statement**)

3.2.3. Original buildings should remain intact, insofar as is possible, but it is accepted some limited works may be necessary. The building's structure, as it is, should be capable of functioning as the intended re-use, or conversion, **without significant works, extension or alteration** needing to be undertaken.

3.2.4. What constitutes "significant" will be assessed on a case by case basis. Buildings with structures such as low breeze block walls, concrete floor pads, large timber frames, corrugated metal sheeting as cladding or roofing, and largely open elevations (or similar structures) are, for example, unlikely to be suitable for conversion to a residential use, given the nature and extent of works required to make them functional. Similarly, structures without suitable existing foundations for the proposed load of the conversion will not be appropriate for conversion. Agricultural buildings which are more substantially brick (and largely intact) are more likely to be acceptable subject to the required confirmation of their ability to be converted. Securing permission for re-use and conversion for residential use can be more challenging than for other uses.

3.2.5. A **structural assessment** should accompany any application to demonstrate the building to be converted is structurally sound so that this can inform a decision as to whether the building can be reasonably⁶ converted or re-used for its intended use. This should be undertaken by a suitably qualified professional⁷ and include:

- A visual inspection of the whole building, including photographs, and general description of it;
- Confirmation of the materials the building is constructed of, and their current quality;
- An external and internal assessment of the quality of the building as a structure, including its condition, structural integrity, damp proofing, joinery, timbers, roof structures, roof covering, the ground, the building foundations and its bearing capacity – considering especially that if it is proposed to become a dwelling the things that would be expected from a 'sound' residential build;

⁶ See paragraph 3.2.10.

⁷ Whilst the Council cannot insist on a truly independent assessment, less weight will be given to assessments which are clearly so biased in favour of an application to make it inappropriate to informing planning decisions. The Council may choose to commission its own assessment. Surveys should normally be undertaken within 12 months prior to submission of the planning application to ensure results are up-to-date and valid.

- An assessment of any structurally significant damage and defects (dereliction, wear, corrosion, collapses, cracks, damp, insect / fungal infestation etc.) and their severity and implications for re-use and/ or conversion;
- An assessment of the repairs that might be needed to rectify any identified defects and the scale of works required to remediate the issue(s), so as to inform the [conversion method statement](#); and
- An overall (and unbiased⁷) opinion on the physical suitability of the building(s) for the proposed conversion and end-use.

3.2.6. A **conversion method statement** will also be required to show, to the Council's satisfaction, that the method of conversion can be undertaken without significant works, extension or alteration to the building or structure. This should be informed by the [structural assessment](#) and also include:

- An overview of the building (external and internal) and its general suitability for conversion;
- Details of all the separate repairs and works (including structural works) necessary to convert the building and bring it into the proposed use;
- A clear summary of the elements to be retained, confirmation that they are in an appropriate condition to be retained, and why these are suitable to be included as part of the conversion, with photographic evidence;
- A summary of the elements to be removed and why this is necessary to do so (condition, design etc.), with photographic evidence;

3.2.7. Information on areas of demolition and rebuild and the works required;

- Details of the internal configuration and the works required to implement these.
- Details of features required to bring it to a modern habitable or useable standard, including how utilities will be incorporated and details of insulation;
- Details of any significant or unique features which are to be retained, highlighted, adapted (where appropriate) or enhanced.

3.2.8. Reports detailing what is proposed should be clear and use visual elements such as photographs, plans and elevations to make the proposals easily understandable.

3.2.9. It is not adequate for the original building to simply be a part of a conversion, it must remain a clear, recognisable and key component of the final design.

3.2.10. *Importantly:* where alterations or design would lead to the original building being subsumed or lost, or giving the appearance of a new building, unrecognisable from its previous form externally, then it will be likely be deemed a new build as it will have required significant works or alterations, and will be assessed as such. Such

proposal will not comply with Policy 25 Part 1 – and will be assessed against [Policy 25, Part 3](#)). This will also be the case if the original building is not deemed to be a permanent construction, is structurally un-sound, or is deemed to be derelict.

- 3.2.11. It is only where the existing building is already suitable for conversion to residential use that the building would be considered to have the permitted development right mentioned in 3.1.3 above.

B) the form, bulk and general design of the buildings are in keeping with the surroundings and the proposal is commensurate with the local building style and the materials used

- 3.2.12. Whilst conversions usually lead to a degree of modernisation in the appearance of the building, changes should respect, and be sensitive, to the design of the original building and its surroundings – unless the proposal can demonstrate, to the Council's satisfaction, that the design solution is more acceptable than the original. There may be scope for more innovative or modern design features as long as these do not lose the essence of the original building, are sensitively designed, and respect the building's setting. The design should take account of the original building and its distinguishing features. Particular care should be taken in the incorporation of new window and door openings.

- 3.2.13. Applicants should use a [Design and Access Statement](#) to show how the proposal meets these requirements.

- 3.2.14. Consideration of Part 1B (and C and D below) will also be informed by assessment against Local Plan Policy 34 (Valuing our Historic Environment), Policy 41 (Character and Local Distinctiveness); for residential proposals, Policy 44 (Residential Design); and for non-residential, Policy 46 (Design of Non-Residential, Commercial and Employment Developments).

C) development would lead to an enhancement of its immediate setting

- 3.2.15. In addition to satisfying Part 1B, greater weight will be given to proposals which help enhance their immediate setting. How this will be achieved should also be explained in a [Design and Access Statement](#).

- 3.2.16. Applicants will need to be mindful that the building itself is part of the setting. Proposals need to retain as much of the building as possible, or that when re-designing or replacing existing elements, they are in keeping with the original building and its setting. It may be the case that the current state of the building detracts from the setting, due to appearing in a state of disrepair, and a sensitively designed proposal could address this and improve overall setting.

- 3.2.17. Consideration may need to be given to defining the application's 'red-line' boundary⁸ quite tightly to help ensure a building's setting is more likely to be enhanced by the approved development; this may be necessary where it is beneficial to clarify a building's proposed '[curtilage](#)'. In such situations the Council would be unlikely to

⁸ as defined on the planning application's 'Location Plan'

view subsequent applications for change of use of adjoining land to residential curtilage favourably unless there was an overriding justification to do so. It may also be appropriate to remove, or restrict, permitted development rights (**Schedule 2, Part 1, Class E**) for conversions where there is concern their subsequent use could harm the immediate setting.

D) the proposal does not adversely affect neighbouring residential amenity

- 3.2.18. Residential amenity is not defined in law. In planning terms, ‘amenity’ is often used to refer to the quality or character of an area and elements that contribute to the overall enjoyment of an area. Residential amenity considers elements that are particularly relevant to the living conditions of a dwelling; and can include factors such as privacy, overbearing effects, natural light and outlook, environmental effects, etc. Local Plan Policy 44A (Residential Design) is also relevant to consideration of residential amenity.

E) the rural location of non-residential development is justifiable to support a prosperous rural economy in accordance with national policy in the NPPF

- 3.2.19. For guidance on how Policy 25 Part 1E should be applied, please see the section on [Policy 25 Part 4](#). Part 4 is equally applicable for proposals for the re-use and conversion of buildings as it is for new buildings and other forms of non-residential development.

F) residential development is not isolated unless in accordance with national rural housing policy in the NPPF;

- 3.2.20. The ‘purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development’ ([NPPF paragraph 7](#)). To do so in rural areas, the [NPPF’s rural housing policy](#) requires that ‘housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities’ ([NPPF paragraph 83](#)).
- 3.2.21. [NPPF paragraph 84](#) requires that **isolated dwellings** should be avoided unless they meet one of 5 listed exceptions (essentially because they do not contribute to these aims).

Interpreting NPPF Paragraph 84 on Isolated Homes

As well as applying to Policy 25 Part 1F, this following guidance on **isolated dwellings** equally applies to other policy (as explained in other parts of this SPD):

- Local interpretation of [NPPF paragraph 84](#) (including proposals in the Green Belt; subject to Green Belt policy being satisfied – see paragraph 4.3.6).
- [Policy 25, Part 2](#) (Replacement of a Dwelling and Extensions to Existing Dwellings in the Countryside Policy Area).
- [Policy 25, Part 3](#) (New Dwellings in the Countryside Policy Area)

- 3.2.22. The 5 listed exceptions of [NPPF paragraph 84](#) (further advice given below) are:
- (a) [essential to meet the needs of a rural worker](#);
 - (b) [optimal viable use of a heritage asset / appropriate enabling development to secure future of heritage assets](#);
 - (c) [re-use redundant or disused buildings and enhance its immediate setting](#);
 - (d) subdivision of existing residential building;
 - (e) the [design is of exceptional quality](#).
- 3.2.23. However, the NPPF does not define what constitutes “isolated development”. The following therefore provides a local definition.
- 3.2.24. In accordance with the Local Plan’s settlement hierarchy, which helps determine where new development should be located in Doncaster, development limits have been defined for 58 settlements (the Main Urban Area, seven Main Towns, ten Service Towns and Villages, and forty Defined Villages). The definition of development limits was partly influenced by national policy in [NPPF paragraph 83](#), that housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Isolation is measured in relation to these defined settlements and their development limits. [Case law](#)⁹ has clarified that, when assessing whether a proposal is isolated, the decision maker should consider its proximity to a settlement, rather than its proximity to other dwellings in the countryside.
- 3.2.25. It will still be a matter of planning judgement as to whether any given site is isolated in terms of it being physically separate, or remote, from a defined settlement. This may include considerations such as:
- Not just physical distance from the settlement; but its sense of remoteness; and how well it may relate / be connected to, or be separated from, a settlement (rather than just other dwellings¹⁰).
 - Proximity, and practical reasonable ease of access, to local services and facilities as well as the ability of the development to support the viable use of limited services in a nearby settlement;
 - Accessibility, including to public transport services and/or whether sustainable transport modes (cycling and walking) could be reasonably used to access the property from a nearby settlement.
- 3.2.26. The remainder of this section (paragraphs 3.2.27 to 3.2.36) discusses the five exceptions to national policy in [NPPF paragraph 84](#) that planning decisions should avoid the development of isolated homes in the countryside.

⁹ City & Country Bramshill Ltd v Secretary of State for Housing, Communities And Local Government & Ors [2021] EWCA Civ 320 (09 March 2021)

¹⁰ [City & Country Bramshill Ltd v Secretary of State for Housing, Communities And Local Government & Ors \[2021\] EWCA Civ 320 \(09 March 2021\) \(bailii.org\)](#)

NPPF Paragraph 84a: Rural Workers Dwellings

- 3.2.27. Demonstrating the need for a new residential dwelling in an isolated location to meet an essential rural business need, be it through conversion of an existing building (in line with [Policy 25 Part 1F](#)) or a newly constructed dwelling (in line with [Policy 25 Part 3](#)), is a relatively high bar to pass. It requires the applicant to demonstrate need that cannot be fulfilled elsewhere, that the business is established, financially sound and will remain as such.
- 3.2.28. National planning practice guidance¹¹ is available for assessing [how the need for isolated homes in the countryside for essential rural workers can be assessed](#). Supporting paragraph 9.12 to Policy 25 notes that Annex A to the withdrawn [Planning Policy Statement 7](#)¹² also remains relevant – its continued use has been accepted by Planning Inspectors.
- 3.2.29. In practice, justifying a new rural worker dwelling in the countryside will require submission of a **Rural Worker’s Dwelling Appraisal**, with the input of a suitably qualified (and unbiased¹³) advisor, such as an agricultural consultant, to help demonstrate need, paid for by the applicant, working to this guidance. Such appraisals will be independently checked by the Council’s own advisor, also at the applicant’s expense. Such evidence will normally require the submission of financial information relating to the personal circumstances of the applicant’s business – this will be kept confidential and not made publicly available but will require inspection by the Council, and if necessary, its own advisor(s). Conclusions, and any supporting statement, must be based on evidence.
- 3.2.30. For all rural worker dwellings in the countryside, the following should be demonstrated and taken into account:

1: Evidence of the **necessity** for a rural worker to live at, **or in close proximity to**, their **place of work** to ensure the **effective operation** of an agricultural, forestry or similar **land-based rural enterprise**. Otherwise known as **Functional Need**.

- This could include where farm animals or agricultural processes require on-site attention 24-hours a day and where otherwise there would be a risk to human or animal health or from crime, or to deal quickly with emergencies that could cause serious loss of crops or products, for example, by frost damage or the failure of automatic systems.
- The need should relate to at least one full-time worker, demonstrated by, for example, calculations based on standard ‘man-day’ figures using recognised sources such as farm management books.

¹¹ [Paragraph: 010 Reference ID: 67-010-20190722](#)

¹² https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ukgwa/20120920042515mp_/http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/147402.pdf

¹³ Whilst the Council cannot insist on a truly independent assessment, less weight will be given to assessments which are clearly so biased in favour of an application to make it inappropriate to informing planning decisions. The Council may choose to commission its own assessment.

- Evidence should be provided that there is no other suitable existing dwelling in the area, including in nearby settlements, within reasonable travelling distance. Need should not be based on the personal preference or circumstances of any individual but on the needs of the enterprise. Inability to afford such alternative accommodation should be supported by financial information – see 3.2.29 above
- Enterprises should be capable of demonstrating that they are established as both a ‘unit’ (e.g. buildings and animals) as well as activity (e.g. agricultural).
- Evidence of any dwelling, or buildings suitable for conversion to dwellings, having been sold separately from the ‘unit’ concerned in the recent past (such as the previous 5 years), may be considered to constitute evidence of lack of need.
- Dwellings should be sited so as to meet the identified functional need and to be well-related to existing buildings, or other dwellings, wherever possible.

2: The degree to which there is **confidence** that the **enterprise will remain viable** for the **foreseeable future**.

- This will require demonstrating that the enterprise has been established for at least three years, is financially sound, and is reasonably expected to remain so for the foreseeable future. This should also include taking into account the cost of converting an existing building or construction of new dwelling (supported by cost information).

3: Whether the provision of an additional dwelling on site is **essential** for the **continued viability** of an agricultural, forestry or similar **land-based rural enterprise through a succession process**.

- Many rural enterprises, are family run businesses, where successive generations share and eventually take over control of its running. This is particularly relevant to farms. A need for an additional dwelling in such circumstances may arise but care must be taken to ensure that additional dwellings, which can have harmful impacts on the countryside, are truly needed. It should be noted the need for a second dwelling may only be temporary.
- In such situations, it should be demonstrated that the existing dwelling serving the enterprise, because of its limited size or extension possibilities, or where the existing occupants is unwilling to downsize or share their home, is unavailable to house the succeeding generation. Case law¹⁴ has established that it is unreasonable to assume a retiring farmer should move out or share their existing dwelling. Need is likely to require justification against labour requirements and how this is affected by retirement of the existing generation including how it has been / will be supported by the succeeding generation.

¹⁴ Keen v Secretary of State for the Environment and Aylesbury Vale District Council [1996] JPL 753

4: **Whether the need could be met through improvements to existing accommodation** on the site, providing such improvements are appropriate taking into account their scale, appearance and the local context.

5: Whether the **size** of any new **dwelling** is **commensurate with the established functional requirement**.

- Dwellings that are unusually large in relation to the needs of the unit, or unusually expensive to construct in relation to the income it can sustain in the long-term, are unlikely to be approved. The value of inappropriately large dwellings will make it more unlikely that a future occupant could comply with an agricultural occupancy condition (see [Section 3.7](#)) thus putting the Council under pressure to remove such a restriction. It is the requirements of the enterprise, rather than those of the owner or occupier, that are relevant in determining the size of dwelling that is appropriate to a particular holding.
- It is expected that dwelling sizes will be modest with build costs capable of being sustained by the enterprise. This should be based on the profits for one of the three years used to demonstrate a functional need (and be clearly evidenced).

6: In the case of **new enterprises**, whether it is appropriate to **consider granting permission for a temporary dwelling** for a trial period (after which another planning application would be needed to reassess whether a permanent dwelling is appropriate).

- 'New enterprise' activity could relate to a newly created 'unit' or an established one.
- Temporary accommodation will be subject to time restrictions, normally three years.
- Temporary dwellings should be capable of satisfying the following:
 - a) clear evidence of a firm intention and ability to develop the enterprise concerned (significant investment in new buildings is often a good indication of intentions);
 - (b) functional need (see [above](#));
 - (c) clear documented evidence that the proposed enterprise has been planned on a sound financial basis;
 - (d) the [functional need](#) could not be fulfilled by another existing dwelling on the unit, or any other existing accommodation in the area which is suitable and available for occupation by the workers concerned; and
 - (e) other normal planning requirements (see 7 below) are satisfied.

7: Whether other planning requirements, such as access, or impact on the countryside, are satisfied.

- Employment on an assembly or food packing line, or the need to accommodate seasonal workers, will generally not be sufficient to justify building isolated rural dwellings.
- Rural worker dwellings will need to comply with other policies in the plan, including those on design.

Other Considerations for Rural Workers Dwellings

- An [occupancy condition](#) will normally be attached to prevent subsequent use for open market housing. These are necessary as the dwellings are located within the countryside where planning permission would not have otherwise been granted. These properties normally provide a supply accommodation to agricultural / forestry workers or are part of active farmsteads. Any subsequent application to seek removal of such a condition will be assessed against Local Plan Policy 8 ([Removal of Occupancy Conditions](#)). [For proposals to extend rural workers dwellings see guidance in 3.3.23 below].
- It may also be appropriate to remove, or restrict, permitted development rights (**Schedule 2, Part 1, Class E**) for such dwellings.

NPPF Paragraph 84b: optimal viable use of a heritage asset / appropriate enabling development to secure future of heritage assets

- 3.2.31. To meet this exception, information should be provided to enable the Council to be sufficiently confident that this will actually be secured in practice. It is insufficient, for example, to just state a new dwelling would help preserve, and where appropriate, enhance the heritage significance and setting of a heritage asset, such as a listed building, without explaining how – noting this is likely to involve an initial (and possibly ongoing) financial cost to the applicant. Historic England have produced guidance on enabling development which can be used to inform relevant planning applications¹⁵.

NPPF Paragraph 84c: re-use redundant or disused buildings and enhance its immediate setting

- 3.2.32. Guidance in this Section 3.2 applies. An applicant will be required to prove that buildings are actually redundant or disused; in making decisions the Council seeks confidence that subsequent applications will not be made for other buildings, constructed in place of converted buildings, still required for the original purpose, to avoid proliferation across the local area.

¹⁵ [Historic England Good Practice Advice in Planning: 4: Enabling Development and Heritage Assets](#)

NPPF Paragraph 84e: Isolated Dwellings of Exceptional Design Quality

- 3.2.33. The Council anticipates that this exception will rarely be capable of being demonstrated. Justifying isolated development on the basis of “**exceptional** design quality” is very difficult. [NPPF paragraph 84e](#), in part, notes that it should be “**truly outstanding**, reflecting the highest standards in architecture, ...”
- 3.2.34. Such matters are not defined, however “exceptional” can be taken to mean “*Of the nature of or forming an exception; out of the ordinary course, unusual, special*”; and “outstanding” can be taken to mean “*remarkable*”, “*noteworthy*”, “*exceptionally good*” and which “*stands out from the rest*”¹⁶.
- 3.2.35. The Council may choose to take the advice of its Design Panel in assessing any relevant planning application.
- 3.2.36. It should be noted that exceptional design quality only applies for development in the countryside where the dwelling is deemed to be [isolated](#) (see paragraph 3.2.23 onwards). In non-isolated countryside locations exceptional design quality by itself cannot be used as a sole reason for a proposal to be granted. Such proposals would need to be justified as satisfying other provisions in Policy 25.

¹⁶ [Oxford English Dictionary Online](#) definitions.

3.3. Policy 25, Part 2: Replacement of a Dwelling and Extensions to Existing Dwellings

- 3.3.1. As national policy seeks to avoid new inappropriate [isolated dwellings](#) in the countryside, proposals to replace or extend dwellings in the Countryside Policy Area will be assessed against the impact on the 'original' existing dwelling.
- 3.3.2. References to “original”, “original’ existing” or “existing” dwelling in Part 2 means the dwelling as it existed on 1 July 1948 (when the Town and Country Planning Act was first introduced) or, if constructed after 1 July 1948, as it was built originally.
- 3.3.3. *Importantly:* there may be times when, whilst technically replacing or extending an existing dwelling, the changes are of such significance that they are considered to instead constitute a new dwelling; in such situations they will be judged against [Policy 25, Part 3](#) as opposed to Part 2.

Replacement Rural Dwellings

- 3.3.4. Policy 25 Part 2 supports the replacement of dwellings in the Countryside Policy Area provided all of criteria A to E are satisfied.

A) the [original](#) building is **permanent** and is not the result of a temporary permission;

- 3.3.5. If this is not the case, then any proposal would instead be assessed as a new dwelling in the countryside, against [Policy 25 Part 3](#).

B) the [original](#) building has **not become derelict or previous residential use abandoned;**

- 3.3.6. Again, if this is not the case, then any proposal would instead be assessed as a new dwelling in the countryside, against [Policy 25 Part 3](#).
- 3.3.7. Whether a building is derelict, or has had its residential use abandoned, will be assessed against the considerations below, which an applicant will need to address in a planning statement.
- 3.3.8. The concept of ‘**abandonment**’ applies in circumstances where a building or land “remains unused for a considerable time, in such circumstances that a reasonable man might conclude that the previous use had been abandoned”¹⁷. Case law¹⁸ has established considerations that can be taken into account in deciding whether a use has been abandoned. The separate factors carry equal weight, and no individual factor is decisive:
- **The physical condition of the buildings:** i.e. is the building fit for habitation? Are features such as walls, roofing, floors and windows notably damaged or

¹⁷ Hartley v MHLG [1970] 1QB 413

¹⁸ Trustees of Castell y Mynach Estate v Secretary of State for Wales and Taff Ely Borough Council [1985] JPL 40

missing? Is it safe to enter? Are there signs of abandonment such as vandalism or arson?

- **The period of non – use:** i.e. how long since the building was last used for residential purposes? What proof is there of occupation – e.g., Council Tax information, or electoral roll records? What has happened in the intervening years that has led to the building falling into such disrepair?
- **Whether there has been any other use:** i.e. has the building been used for another reason, to the point it could now be said that the original residential use has been abandoned or lost to an alternate use? Are there permissions for an alternate use?
- **The owner’s intentions:** i.e. has there been any applications or contact with the Local Planning Authority in the intervening years about the property, its upkeep or development? Is there evidence of attempts made to maintain the property to habitable standard? Are there mitigating circumstances to explain why the building has fallen into such disrepair? If there has been an alternate use of the building, is there demonstrable proof of firm intention to retain, or return to, the building’s use as a dwelling?

3.3.9. In considering applications, the Council will ensure any existing dwelling is lawful and permanent in nature. The term “lawful” means that planning permission was granted for the original construction of the dwelling; or that the dwelling was constructed prior to the introduction of planning controls; or that the dwelling was constructed unlawfully but a certificate of lawfulness has since been granted. An existing dwelling can also be lawful if created through an approved change of use or conversion.

C) replacement dwellings are positioned on a **comparable footprint**, and in **close proximity**, to the **original** building unless it can be demonstrated that the re-positioning would be significantly more beneficial (to, for example, the character and appearance of the site and locality). Any **increase in volume should not exceed 40%** above that of the **original** building where it will have a significant impact on the character of the countryside;

3.3.10. Where replacing a dwelling in the Countryside Policy Area, the volume of the new dwelling should not exceed 40% of that of the **original** dwelling, although, as per Local Plan paragraph 9.10, there may be exceptions in the case of a replacement dwelling of exceptional quality or innovative design (see [NPPF Paragraph 84e: Isolated Dwellings of Exceptional Design](#)).

3.3.11. The Council anticipates that this exception will rarely be capable of being demonstrated. Justifying isolated development on the basis of “**exceptional design quality**” is very difficult. NPPF paragraph 84e, in part, notes that it should be “**truly outstanding**”, reflecting the highest standards in architecture, ...”

3.3.12. Such matters are not defined, however “**exceptional**” can be taken to mean “Of the nature of or forming an exception; out of the ordinary course, unusual, special”; and

“outstanding” can be taken to mean “remarkable”, “noteworthy”, “exceptionally good” and which “stands out from the rest”.

- 3.3.13. The Council may choose to take the advice of its Design Panel in assessing any relevant planning application.
- 3.3.14. It should be noted that exceptional design quality only applies for development in the countryside where the dwelling is deemed to be isolated (see paragraph 3.2.23 onwards). In non-isolated countryside locations exceptional design quality by itself cannot be used as a sole reason for a proposal to be granted. Such proposals would need to be justified as satisfying other provisions in Policy 25 above.
- 3.3.15. As per Local Plan paragraph 9.9 **calculations for the 40% increase** should take account of “any previous extensions, alterations and out-buildings [...] **measured externally and inclusive of any permitted development right**” that has been employed – all of which count towards the 40% increase allowed. If, for example, extensions and previous permitted development have extended the original dwelling by 20%, then an additional 20% (measured against the original dwelling, not the original with extensions) would be possible.
- 3.3.16. In undertaking this calculation **outbuildings within the curtilage of the existing dwelling** should be taken into account, subject to the following guidance:
- Definition of “**curtilage**” – Government’s [technical guidance](#) to Permitted Development Rights for Householders’ defines curtilage as “land which forms part and parcel with the house. Usually it is the area of land within which the house sits, or to which it is attached, such as the garden, but for some houses, especially in the case of properties with large grounds, it may be a smaller area.” There is case law¹⁹ on defining curtilage which tends to assume definition is a question of “fact and degree” and that factors such as the degree of connection between an existing dwelling and surrounding land (in terms of physical layout, ownership and use) as well as the degree of spatial and visual separation/connection are important considerations.
 - Permitted Development Rights may appear quite generous as to what can be built within the curtilage of a dwelling (see box below) but in taking into account buildings (such as outbuildings) in the calculation of volume of an “original” dwelling, an applicant will clearly need to demonstrate that such building(s) are “**incidental to the enjoyment of a dwellinghouse**” given this is the purpose of [GDPO Schedule 2, Part 1, Class E](#). This would, for example, exclude buildings used for a business.

¹⁹ for example : [Burford v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government & Anor \[2017\] EWHC 1493](#)

[Schedule 2, Part 1, Class E](#) of the General Permitted Development Order (buildings etc incidental to the enjoyment of a dwellinghouse) permits, subject to the full rules of the order, for example:

- construction of common buildings such as storage buildings and garages as long as they can be properly be described as having a purpose incidental to the enjoyment of the dwelling.
- the total area of ground covered by buildings, enclosures (i.e. gate, fence, wall or other means of enclosure) and containers within the curtilage (other than the original dwellinghouse) to be up to 50% of the total area of the curtilage (excluding the ground area of the original dwellinghouse).
- construction of outbuildings with a dual-pitched roof of up to 4m in height.

Please consult the [GDPO](#) for full conditions relating to these permitted development rights. Permitted Development Rights can be complex to interpret. Consult with the Planning Department or your own Planning Agent if in any doubt.

- 3.3.17. Essentially, whether an outbuilding is within the curtilage of a dwelling will be a matter of judgement for the case officer, based on, amongst other matters, the above, distance from and relationship to the host dwelling; and its use, function, state of repair and permanence.
- 3.3.18. The Council will look unfavourably upon proposals where there is a realistic prospect that the “abuse” of permitted development rights could take, or has taken place (e.g. where, in the Council’s opinion, outbuildings have been constructed which are then used to justify an inappropriately large and harmful new development). The Council may also choose to condition the withdrawal of permitted development rights to prevent subsequent permitted development occurring where this is considered would be harmful to, for example, the character and appearance of the countryside.
- 3.3.19. Replacement dwellings should be based on a **comparable footprint** to the [original](#) building (unless there is proven benefit to re-positioning it, which would not include, for example, a desire to simply improve views from a building).
- 3.3.20. ‘Any increase in volume should not exceed 40% above that of the [original](#) building where it will have a significant impact on the character of the countryside’. Although it may be possible to exceed the 40% measurement, subject to impact on the character of the countryside, given the policy requirement for the replacement building to be on a comparable footprint, development which significantly exceeds this is unlikely to be approved.

D) the proposal does not adversely affect neighbouring residential amenity;

- 3.3.21. See 3.2.18 above for a definition of residential amenity.

E) it would **not undermine** the retention of any **occupancy condition**.

- 3.3.22. A replacement dwelling for one subject to a rural workers [occupancy condition](#) will be refused if it results in a building that is unusually large, in relation to the needs of the unit, or unusually expensive to construct, in relation to the income an associated rural enterprise is unlikely to be able to sustain in the long-term. The value of inappropriately large dwellings will make it more unlikely that a future occupant could comply with an agricultural occupancy condition (see Section 3.7) thus putting the Council under pressure to remove such a restriction – and thus causing loss of valuable affordable accommodation for rural workers.

Extensions to Existing Rural Dwellings

- 3.3.23. Policy 25 Part 2 also supports the extension of dwellings (or any other building in its curtilage) in the Countryside Policy Area provided all of criteria A, B, D, E, F and G are satisfied. (Note Part 2C is not relevant to extensions).

[See above for [A](#), [B](#), [D](#) & [E](#).]

F) **increases in volume** should **not** exceed 40% above that of the **existing** building

- 3.3.24. Calculations for the 40% increase should take account of previous extensions, alterations and any permitted development which count towards the 40% increase allowed. If, for example, extensions and previous permitted development have extended the [original](#) dwelling by 20%, then an additional 20% (measured against the [original](#) dwelling, not the original with extensions) would be possible. Volume calculations are made using external measurements of the dwelling and as proposed to be extended
- 3.3.25. In undertaking this assessment, the guidance given above in paragraphs 3.3.15 – 3.3.18 should also be followed.
- 3.3.26. Unlike replacement dwellings where, with provisos, a lack of significant impact on the Countryside Policy Area could support going above the 40% policy measurement, no such allowance applies here (so as to limit the potential of larger extensions compromising the character of the original building).
- 3.3.27. Whilst this policy applies to all rural buildings, In the specific case of agricultural workers dwellings, proposals to extend them often makes them more valuable and then less attractive to other farm workers and therefore particular consideration will be given to the need to limit the size of any alteration. Applicants shall provide clear evidence (in a [Rural Worker's Dwelling Appraisal](#)) of the need for the addition; and demonstrate that the business (if linked to a farmstead or rural activity) is profitable and capable of sustaining the cost of the extension; and that a need for the dwelling still exists. For instance, extensions to dwellings on non-active businesses are unlikely to be supported.

F) would **not have a visual impact prejudicial** to the **character of the building** or the **amenity of the countryside**

- 3.3.28. Extensions should respect, and be sensitive, to the design of the original dwelling and its surroundings. There may be scope for more innovative or modern design features so long as these do not lose the essence of the original dwelling, are sensitively designed, and respect the dwelling's setting. The design should take account of the original dwelling and its distinguishing character.
- 3.3.29. Applicants should use a [Design and Access Statement](#) to show how the proposal meets these requirements.
- 3.3.30. Consideration of Part 2F will also be informed by assessment against Local Plan Policy 41 (Character and Local Distinctiveness) and Policy 44 (Residential Design).

3.4. Policy 25, Part 3: New Dwellings

3.4.1. As national policy seeks to avoid new inappropriate [isolated dwellings](#) in the countryside, new dwellings in the Countryside Policy Area are restricted by Policy 25, Part 3, to:

- [dwellings to for rural workers](#);
- [rural exception sites](#); and
- homes of [exceptional design quality](#) (see paragraphs 3.2.33 to 3.2.36) regarding Policy 25 Part 1 which can also be applied here).

3.4.2. As explained in paragraphs 3.2.10 and 3.3.3 there may be times when proposals to convert buildings, or to replace or extend dwellings, may be so significant as to constitute a new dwelling(s). Such proposals should be judged against Policy 25 Part 3 as opposed to Parts 1 or 2.

New dwellings for Rural Workers

3.4.3. Guidance given [above for Policy 25 Part 1f](#) (specifically [interpreting NPPF Paragraph 84 on isolated homes](#) / [NPPF Paragraph 84a](#)) applies to applications for new dwellings for rural workers.

3.4.4. The submission of a [Rural Worker's Dwelling Appraisal](#) is strongly advised to help justify such proposals.

In the **Countryside Policy Area**, planning permission will be granted for dwellings to meet the **essential needs** of an **existing agriculture, forestry, or other enterprise which justifies a rural location**, where it can be demonstrated **that** [..Part 3A and B..]:

A) there is a demonstrable **functional need** which relates to a full-time worker that cannot be fulfilled by an existing dwelling in the area;

3.4.5. See [interpreting NPPF Paragraph 84 on isolated homes](#) / [NPPF Paragraph 84a](#) above – including the guidance relating to:

- [demonstrating functional need](#)
- [demonstrating need cannot be met via a suitable existing dwelling in the area or nearby settlement](#)
- [demonstrating need cannot be met via improvements to existing accommodation on the site itself](#)

B) the enterprise has been **established** for **at least three years**, is **financially sound**, and has a **clear prospect of remaining so**.

3.4.6. See [interpreting NPPF Paragraph 84 on isolated homes](#) / [NPPF Paragraph 84a](#) above – including the guidance relating to:

- [demonstrating confidence that the enterprise will remain viable for the foreseeable future.](#)

If a **new dwelling** is essential to support the **essential needs** of a new agriculture, forestry or other **enterprise which justifies a rural location**, it should normally, **for the first three years, be provided by temporary accommodation that can demonstrate** [..Part 3C and D..]:

C) there is a demonstrable **functional need** which relates to a full-time worker that cannot be fulfilled by an existing dwelling in the area;

3.4.7. As paragraph 3.4.5 above.

D) there is clear evidence of a **firm intention and ability to develop the enterprise** concerned and that the proposed enterprise has been **planned on a sound financial basis**

3.4.8. See [interpretating NPPF Paragraph 84 on isolated homes](#) / [NPPF Paragraph 84a](#) above – including the guidance relating to:

- [new enterprises.](#)

Any such development will be subject to a **restrictive occupancy condition.**

3.4.9. Any dwelling granted in accordance with Policy 25, Part 3, will be subject to a [restrictive occupancy condition](#) to prevent future loss to open market housing and to prevent abuse of the national planning policy in [NPPF 84a](#).

Applications for **temporary and mobile homes** will be **considered favourably where needed during the construction of a permanent dwelling** on site or on a nearby site.

Permission granted for **temporary accommodation will be subject to time restrictions.**

Other proposals for new dwellings in the Countryside Policy Area will be supported in line with national policy for **'entry level' exception sites** for housing, **rural exception sites** for housing and for **isolated homes of exceptional design quality.**

Rural Exception Sites

3.4.10. As explained in the [NPPF's Glossary](#) 'rural exception sites' are **small sites** used for **affordable housing** (as [defined in the NPPF's Glossary](#)) **in perpetuity** where **sites would not normally be used for housing** (i.e. they are an exception to policies in the Local Plan). Rural exception sites seek to address the needs of the local community by accommodating households who are either current residents or have an existing family or employment connection.

- 3.4.11. In the Countryside Policy Area, and in line with NPPF [Paragraph 82](#), the Council will support opportunities to bring forward ‘**rural exception sites**’. Decisions will respond to local circumstances and support proposals that reflect local housing needs, provided this is demonstrated by appropriate evidence, such as a local housing needs survey (be it produced by the Council, where it already exists, or the applicant, if it doesn’t or a more up to date survey is considered appropriate). In practice, need is more likely to be capable of being demonstrated in the Countryside Policy Area adjacent to smaller settlements, at the lower end of the Local Plan’s Settlement Hierarchy (see Policy 1), such as the Local Plan’s ‘Defined Villages’, rather than adjacent to the ‘Doncaster Main Urban Area’ or the ‘Main Towns’. For the larger settlements it is more appropriate that need is met within existing Development Limits – a factor also taken into account during Local Plan preparation.
- 3.4.12. As a guide, rural exception sites are expected to be up to 10 houses in size and be commensurate with the scale of the settlement (after first having demonstrated a need for them exists) and be compliant with other Local Plan policy, such as Policy 41 (Character and Local Distinctiveness), Policy 42 (Good Urban Design) and Policy 44 (Residential Design). Care should be taken that:
- the site is well related to the existing built form of the settlement and would represent a logical extension to the built up area or is of a scale and nature that is in keeping with the core shape, form and size of the settlement; and
 - The development will not cause significant harm to a settlement’s character, setting and appearance (including partial or total coalescence with another settlement) or to the intrinsic character and beauty of the surrounding countryside;
- 3.4.13. Rural exception sites can deliver a [small proportion of market housing](#), provided that it can be demonstrated that this is necessary in order to ensure the overall viability of the site. A proportion of market homes may be allowed on rural exception sites [at the Council’s discretion](#), for example where essential to enable the delivery of affordable units without grant funding.
- 3.4.14. Other than allowing for market housing, if the Council is satisfied because of the evidence provided that a rural exception site would not be viable if it were required to deliver only affordable housing, the [Council may consider whether alternative approaches to securing site viability can be pursued](#). This may include (but is not limited to):
- allowing for flexibility in tenure, size, or type of housing to be provided.
 - allowing for flexibility in the phasing of the development.
 - accepting the provision of a commuted sum to be used for provision of affordable housing on another site or sites.
 - obtaining other sources of funding such as grants.
- 3.4.15. Please Note: as explained in paragraphs 4.4.40 to 4.4.43 rural exception sites will not be approved in Doncaster’s Green Belt.

Exception Sites for Community-led Developments / Entry Level Exception Sites / First Homes / Starter Homes

3.4.16. In the December 2023 version of the NPPF, references to ‘**Entry level exception sites**’ (a form of rural exception site suitable for first time buyers or first time renters of new homes) were deleted and replaced with ‘**exception sites for Community-led developments**’. This change supersedes Local Plan Policy 25 Part 3’s reference to ‘entry level’ exception sites.

3.4.17. NPPF [Paragraph 73](#) supports the development of **exception sites for community-led development** on sites that would not otherwise be suitable as rural exception sites. These sites are defined in the NPPF’s [Glossary](#) as

“development instigated and taken forward by a not for-profit organisation set up and run primarily for the purpose of meeting the housing needs of its members and the wider local community, rather than being a primarily commercial enterprise. The organisation is created, managed and democratically controlled by its members. It may take any one of various legal forms including a community land trust, housing co-operative and community benefit society. Membership of the organisation is open to all beneficiaries and prospective beneficiaries of that organisation. The organisation should own, manage or steward the homes in a manner consistent with its purpose, for example through a mutually supported arrangement with a Registered Provider of Social Housing. The benefits of the development to the specified community should be clearly defined and consideration given to how these benefits can be protected over time, including in the event of the organisation being wound up.”

3.4.18. These sites should be on land which is not already allocated for housing and should:

(a) be community-led development that includes one or more of the types of **affordable housing** as [defined in the NPPF’s glossary](#) namely:

- [affordable housing for rent](#) which meets all of the NPPF’s [required conditions](#).
- [starter homes](#)
- [discounted market sales housing](#)
- [other affordable routes to home ownership](#), such as ‘shared ownership’, ‘relevant equity loans’, ‘other low cost homes for sale (at a price equivalent to at least 20% below local market value)’ and ‘rent to buy (which includes a period of intermediate rent)’

and

(b) **be adjacent²⁰ to existing settlements** (this is to be interpreted as lying within Countryside Policy Area but adjacent to a settlement’s defined ‘Development Limit’ as shown on the Local Plan’s [Policies Map](#);

²⁰ to quote the Oxford English Dictionary (www.oed.com) ‘adjacent. means: “Next to or very near something else; neighbouring; bordering, contiguous; adjoining.” Whilst, in any given case, considering whether a site is adjacent will be a question of fact and degree, and a matter for the decision-maker, it will be expected that developments

be proportionate in size to them (i.e. [be no larger than one hectare in size or exceed 5% of the size of the existing settlement as per NPPF Footnote 37](#)) – size is to be interpreted as number of dwellings);

not compromise the protection given to areas or assets of particular importance in the NPPF (as per NPPF [Footnote 38](#)) – which in Doncaster means: Green Belt; [Thorne and Hatfield Moors Special Area of Conservation and Special Protection Area](#) and Doncaster’s 15 [Sites of Special Scientific Interest](#) (see also [Local Plan](#) Figure 10); irreplaceable habitats (such as Ancient Woodland & Ancient and veteran trees) ; [designated heritage assets](#) (and other heritage assets of archaeological interest referred to in [footnote 72 of the NPPF](#) which in Doncaster would be any shown on the [Local Heritage List](#)); and [areas at risk of flooding](#); and

comply with any local design policies and standards (which in Doncaster means relevant Local Plan design policies such as Policy 41, 46 and 48).

- 3.4.19. A proportion of market homes may be allowed on the site at the local planning authority’s discretion, for example where essential to enable the delivery of affordable units without grant funding.
- 3.4.20. Prior to the December 2023 NPPF revision, the Government had already announced, in a **Written Ministerial Statement**²¹, that since (the now former) entry-level exception site policy has not delivered affordable housing to the extent originally envisaged, that it is replaced by new ‘**First Homes exception sites**’ policy, effective from 28 June 2021. However, the Statement also confirms that transitional arrangements apply which mean that the Doncaster Local Plan did not need to include a policy on First Homes exceptions sites and which also means that “the First Homes requirements will also not need to be applied when considering planning applications in Doncaster until such time as the requirements are introduced through a subsequent update to the Local Plan.” Therefore, **First Homes policy does not currently apply in Doncaster.**
- 3.4.21. Please note: First Homes policy was introduced by the Government as a replacement for former **Starter Homes** policy which is [withdrawn](#) – it therefore does not apply in Doncaster.
- 3.4.22. Please also note: in line with [NPPF Paragraph 73](#) read in conjunction with [NPPF footnote 38](#) ‘exception sites for community-led development’ will not be approved in Doncaster’s Green Belt (see paragraphs 4.4.40 to 4.4.43).
- 3.4.23. Further guidance on Affordable Housing is given in Section 2 of the [Technical and Developer Requirements SPD](#).

will in effect be [directly adjacent](#) to an existing settlement to avoid creation of resulting infill plots creating pressure for further development.

²¹ <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2021-05-24/hcws50>, 24 May 2021

3.5. Policy 25, Part 4: New Non-Residential Development

3.5.1. Policy 25, Part 4 states that:

Proposals for **non-residential developments will be supported** in the Countryside Policy Area **provided that [... all of A-D are met...]**

A) the rural location of the enterprise is justifiable to support a prosperous rural economy in accordance with national policy in the NPPF

3.5.2. There is limited specific guidance on how local planning policies should support rural economic development proposals but [NPPF Paragraph 88](#), one of the two paragraphs, on '[supporting a prosperous rural economy](#)' provides clear policy that planning decisions should enable:

- [\(88a\) the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of businesses in rural both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings;](#)
- [\(88b\) the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;](#)
- [\(88c\) sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside; and](#)
- [\(88d\) the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.](#)

3.5.3. [NPPF Paragraph 89](#) requires that “planning decisions should recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport. In these circumstances it will be important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads and exploits any opportunities to make a location more sustainable (for example by improving the scope for access on foot, by cycling or by public transport). The use of previously developed land, and sites that are physically well-related to existing settlements, should be encouraged where suitable opportunities exist.

3.5.4. NPPF Paragraph 88 and 89 represents policy for both rural settlements and countryside. The following guidance is for proposals in the Countryside Policy Area [but note Section 4.3, which discusses the possibility of employing NPPF Paragraphs 88 and 89 policy to help demonstrate “[very special circumstances](#)” for otherwise inappropriate development in the Green Belt].

NPPF Paragraph 88a) Sustainable Growth / Expansion of Rural Business

3.5.5. [NPPF paragraph 88a](#) is clear it is related to “[all types of business](#) in rural areas”. There is therefore wide scope for what is potentially acceptable. However, this Policy also requires growth or expansion to be sustainable – this is not just economically,

but also environmentally and socially sustainable. Development must also be compliant with all other relevant NPPF and Local Plan policies. Care should be taken that proposals would not result in excessive expansion and encroachment of building development into the countryside.

3.5.6. The NPPF's Glossary defines 'main town centre uses' as:

"retail development (including warehouse clubs and factory outlet centres); leisure, entertainment and more intensive sport and recreation uses (including cinemas, restaurants, drive-through restaurants, bars and pubs, nightclubs, casinos, health and fitness centres, indoor bowling centres and bingo halls); offices; and arts, culture and tourism development (including theatres, museums, galleries and concert halls, hotels and conference facilities)."

3.5.7. As their name suggests, 'main town centre uses' should be located in town centres or at least within settlements and sites physically well-related to them. Whilst Local Plan Policy 22 (Locating Main Town Centre Uses) guides the location of such uses, any application in the countryside, be it the main use or an ancillary use, should be capable of justifying how (given [NPPF Paragraph 89](#)) it is meeting a local business or community need.

3.5.8. Proposals will also be assessed against Local Plan Policy 46 (Design of Non-Residential, Commercial and Employment Developments), amongst others.

3.5.9. Local carbon and renewable energy proposals will be supported where shown to be in accordance with Local Plan Policy 58 (Low Carbon and Renewable Energy) or Policy 59 (Wind Energy Developments).

3.5.10. Proposals will not be acceptable due to personal or economic preference to locate in any given rural location unless there is a justifiable need to locate a business in that rural location.

NPPF Paragraph 88b) Development / Diversification of Agricultural / Other Land-Based Rural Businesses

3.5.11. Diversification proposals (which usually relate to farming enterprises) should not be a distraction from the main rural business operation and should be supplementary to the farm enterprise. To ensure proposals for new development do not compromise the working of the farm business the Council is unlikely to support the piecemeal stripping of assets from farms without regard for the overall viability of the farm holding. As such proposals are more likely to be supported where applicants can demonstrate that proposals would:

- sustain the long term operation of the existing business;
- not compromise the working of the existing business;
- be consistent with the scale and rural location of the existing business;
- be located within or well related to existing building groups;
- not result in excessive expansion and encroachment of building development into the countryside.

- 3.5.12. Demonstrating the above will be facilitated by supporting viability information as part of an application's Planning Statement / [Design and Access Statement](#); financial viability information may be required but can be submitted confidentially.
- 3.5.13. **Whole Estate Plans** are a document prepared by individual land owning estates. They set out the assets of the estate and the opportunities and threats which the estate may encounter and describes their plans for the future. A Whole Estate Plan should include environmental and social assets, public benefits, and issues as well as economic development projects. An endorsed Whole Estate Plan will be a material consideration in determining planning applications and will provide a solid understood contextual background to any development proposals. The inclusion of a development proposal within a Whole Estate Plan however does not guarantee that planning permission will be granted and any proposal will still need to comply with relevant Local Plan policies

NPPF Paragraph 88c) Sustainable Rural Tourism / Leisure Developments

- 3.5.14. Tourism and leisure activities are vital to many parts of Doncaster's rural economy. Support will be given to proposals which utilise and enrich but do not harm, the character of the countryside. The provision of essential facilities, to enhance visitors' enjoyment, and/or improve the financial viability, of a particular countryside feature or attraction, will be more favourably supported provided they will not detract from the attractiveness or importance of the feature, or the surrounding countryside, and where identified needs are not by existing facilities in existing nearby settlements. Facilities should be proposed where they are only absolutely essential, and appropriate in scale and kind, to the needs of the use.
- 3.5.15. Any proposals for large-scale tourism and leisure developments in rural areas must be accompanied by robust supporting information to allow proper assessment to weigh-up their advantages and disadvantages to the locality in terms of sustainable development objectives (economic, social and environmental).
- 3.5.16. Proposals for new caravan sites, and similar mobile tourism accommodation, or extension to existing sites, require careful consideration. New sites are likely to be more acceptable where sustainably located in relation to nearby attractions and facilities that can encourage access by means other than by private car. Caravan sites, particularly static caravan sites, can be difficult to assimilate successfully into the countryside without causing significant adverse impact upon its intrinsic character and beauty. It is important that tourism-related accommodation is not used as permanent living accommodation which is more sustainably located in existing settlements. Proposals to subsequently convert tourism accommodation to residential will be considered as per any other residential proposal in the Countryside Policy Area or Green Belt.
- 3.5.17. Guidance in paragraphs 3.5.6 and 3.5.8 above relating to consideration of proposals for 'main town centre uses' that should be located in town centres rather than the countryside is also relevant to consideration of NPPF paragraph 88c.

NPPF Paragraph 88d) Supporting Retention / Development of Accessible Local Services / Community Facilities

- 3.5.18. [NPPF Paragraph 88d](#) is primarily for proposals within rural settlements (i.e. within their development limits and outside of the Countryside Policy Area) as local services and community facilities are best located in settlements. Feasibly, proposals could come forward beyond settlement boundaries but to be acceptable they should be adjacent to, or physically well-related to a settlement's development limits.
- 3.5.19. Guidance in paragraphs 3.5.6 and 3.5.8 above relating to consideration of proposals for 'main town centre uses' that should be located in town centres rather than the countryside is also relevant to consideration of NPPF paragraph 88d.

B) the location of the enterprise would not have a significant adverse effect on neighbouring uses or on highway safety;

- 3.5.20. Local Plan Policy 46A)2 requires that proposals be designed to have no unacceptable negative effects upon the amenity of **neighbouring land uses**. [NPPF Paragraph 114d](#) requires that any significant impacts from development on **highway safety** can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree; Local Plan Policy 13A)6 is consistent with this.

C) the development is of a size (including floorspace) and scale commensurate with an existing use, or that reasonably required for a new use, and with the rural character of the location;

- 3.5.21. NPPF [Paragraph 180b](#) requires that planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and location environment including by 'recognising the **intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside**'. In effect, this means proposals will be assessed against, amongst others, Local Plan Policies 41 (Character and Local Distinctiveness), 46 (Design of Non-Residential, Commercial and Employment Developments) and 48 (Landscaping of New Developments).
- 3.5.22. In order to protect the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, rural economic development proposals, considered otherwise acceptable, should be restricted to that **reasonable necessary** for the proposed use. This will be assessed in terms of size (including floorspace but also volume and massing) and applicants should explain why proposed buildings are required as proposed.
- 3.5.23. Care should be taken that proposals do not, for example, involve buildings, facilities or uses that may become a destination in their own right and which are not actually **reasonably required** for the principal proposed development. Any **ancillary development** (such as car parking or 'welfare facilities' – i.e. facilities that are necessary for the well-being of employees or site users – such as changing facilities or eating and drinking spaces) should not be of such a scale that they would be likely to attract visitors in their own right.

D) the scale and design of the proposal would not have a significant adverse impact on the landscape.

- 3.5.24. This requirement is consistent with [NPPF Paragraph 180a](#) which ensures planning decisions contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment including by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, in a manner commensurate with their identified quality in the development plan.
- 3.5.25. In effect, this means proposals will be assessed against, amongst others, Local Plan Policies 41 (Character and Local Distinctiveness), 46 (Design of Non-Residential, Commercial and Employment Developments) and 48 (Landscaping of New Developments).

Waste Management Proposals

- 3.5.26. In addition to Local Plan Policy 25, Part 4, the [Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham \(BDR\) Joint Waste Plan](#) contains a number of policies that identify locations for waste facilities, safeguard and enhance existing strategic waste management sites, and provide details on new strategic waste management sites. Policy WCS4 provides clarity for waste management proposals on non-allocated sites including those in the countryside. Part B of the policy lists the types of locations where waste management proposals may be acceptable in principle. In the countryside these could include:
- existing waste transfer recycling, composting, treatment and recovery sites,
 - agricultural buildings,
 - waste water treatment and sewage works,
 - active mineral workings, and
 - landfill sites
- 3.5.27. Future waste proposals on non-allocated sites will be assessed against [Joint Waste Plan](#) policies WCS4, WCS5 (Landfill) and WCS6 (general considerations for waste management proposals), and relevant policies in the Doncaster Local Plan, including principles relating to layout, design, energy efficiency and sustainable construction and detailed requirements relating to green infrastructure, landscape, biodiversity and flood prevention.
- 3.5.28. The [National Planning Policy for Waste \(NPPW\)](#) states waste planning authorities should prepare Local Plans which identify sufficient opportunities to meet the identified needs of their area for the management of waste streams. The [South Yorkshire Waste Needs Assessment \(2021-2041\)](#) identifies capacity gaps for composting, inert recycling, inert recovery, and non-hazardous landfill. Table ES1 in the Waste Needs Assessment identifies the capacity gaps and timeframes. Additional waste management facilities to be provided within the Doncaster area will only be considered if they address existing and future capacity gaps as noted above. The NPPW also states that priority should be given to the re-use of previously-developed land, sites identified for employment uses, and redundant agricultural and forestry buildings and their curtilages.

3.6. Fallback Permitted Development

- 3.6.1. Some applicants may wish to argue that because '[permitted development rights](#)'²² exist certain development, that may not otherwise be acceptable, should be allowed due to it being preferable to what *could* be developed under permitted development. This is known as a 'fall back' position and can be a material consideration. Whilst legitimate, applicants may seek to use it as leverage to obtain permission for a development by comparing the proposal to what could happen on the land without planning permission.
- 3.6.2. It is most frequently argued in the case of conversion of agricultural buildings to dwellinghouses ([GDPO Class Q – agricultural buildings to dwellinghouses](#)).
- 3.6.3. In such circumstances, it is the Council's expectation that applicants will need to demonstrate that there is a real and serious prospect (as opposed to a hypothetical or theoretical one) that the fall back position will be delivered. The Council will need to see detailed proof of the type of development that would be brought forward under permitted development. The planning history of a site should be checked to establish whether historic permissions have already removed permitted development rights.
- 3.6.4. Case law has established that there must be a real prospect of a fallback development being initiated: for a prospect to be a real prospect, it does not have to be probable or likely, a possibility will suffice. However, it is has also been held that the role of planning judgment is vital and is still dependant on the individual circumstances of each case.
- 3.6.5. As such, when considering whether fallback has a real prospect of being implemented, the Council will take account of factors such as the following:
- Proof the agricultural building is suitable for conversion to both the fall back and the alternative proposal (if relevant in the case of the latter) (in compliance with the requirements of [Policy 25, Part 1](#)).
 - Detailed plans of both the scheme proposed under permitted development and the alternative development proposal.
 - Any relevant proof the permitted development has been seriously explored, for example, building quotes for the works.
 - Any previous correspondence with the Council (if it exists) about potentially developing the site in question.

²² See Planning Practice Guidance for overview of [What are permitted development rights?](#)

3.7. Policy 8: Removal of Occupancy Conditions

3.7.1. Local Plan Policy 8, on the removal of 'occupancy conditions', states

The **removal of occupancy conditions on dwellings** will **only** be permitted in **exceptional circumstances** where it can be **demonstrated**, via an independent report, that [...both parts A and B are satisfied...]:

3.7.2. Dwellings that are affordable to rural workers, who generally have lower incomes, are a relatively scarce resource worth protecting. Originally built to serve the needs of past rural enterprises, mostly in agriculture, they are often subject to conditions requiring they remain solely for occupancy by rural workers. When looking to remove an occupancy condition, applicants should refer to the original permission and check the wording of the condition, and the reason that the condition was applied. This will help inform the applicants of what needs to be shown to have changed in the intervening period to justify the removal of the condition.

3.7.3. Policy 8 is strongly worded to avoid unnecessary loss of such dwellings to only in exceptional circumstances. To meet the demands of the policy is a relatively high bar to overcome. However, Policy recognises there may be instances where a dwelling for a rural worker in the countryside is no longer needed.

3.7.4. To satisfy both criteria A and B of Policy 8 and independent²³ report, paid for by the applicant, will be required to demonstrate compliance.

A) There is **no longer a long-term need for the dwelling** on the particular enterprise on which the dwelling is located; and

3.7.5. There may no longer be a need for a dwelling on the particular enterprise on which the dwelling is located either due to changes in the nature of the business or that the business is no longer viable. Clear evidence of the following will need to be provided in the independent report:

- Changes in the nature of businesses should be clearly explained documenting why they are expected to be long term (effectively permanent) changes and where the previous occupants now live, or where the current occupants will live. The Council will not look favourably upon applications where related additional dwellings, which have a clear connection to the rural enterprise, have been built to serve the enterprise which have resulted in the subject dwelling being no longer required.
- Where it is being claimed that the associated business is no longer viable, the Council will expect to receive appropriate financial records to prove this. These will be kept confidential and not made publicly accessible but need to be made available to the decision maker).

²³ Whilst the Council cannot insist on a truly independent assessment, less weight will be given to assessments which are clearly so biased in favour of an application to make it inappropriate to inform planning decisions. The Council may choose to commission its own assessment.

- 3.7.6. Whilst not specifically required by criterion A, the Council, in making its assessment, will need to be convinced, via criterion B below, that loss of the dwelling would not harm the ability of other rural workers to purchase and make use of the dwelling.

B) Unsuccessful attempts have been made to sell or rent the dwelling at a price that takes account of the occupancy condition.

- 3.7.7. Unless there are special circumstances to justify restricting the dwelling to the particular enterprise where the dwelling is located, an occupancy condition is likely to allow occupation by other workers in the locality. In this case it should be considered whether there is other demand locally, not just whether the demand for this particular enterprise has ceased.
- 3.7.8. The independent report will be required to evidence that unsuccessful attempts have been made to sell or rent the dwelling at a price which takes account of the occupancy condition. The applicant will be required to acquire at least 3 property valuations and to market the property for 12 months, with the occupancy condition clearly stated, and at a price of 30% below normal market value to reflect this. See paragraph 6.14 of the supporting text to Policy 8.
- 3.7.9. Prior to marketing the property, applicants should agree the marketing price with the Council (Planning Department), taking account of an average of the 3 valuations to propose a fair price. This will reduce the risk of the marketing exercise needing to be re-run if the Council considers the price being asked for was unreasonable. Applicants should speak to the Council in the first instance.
- 3.7.10. The accompanying independent report should provide evidence of how and where the property was marketed, and when (online, trade publications etc.), as well as a list, and details, of any offers and enquiries, with any reasons for rejecting these clearly explained.

3.8. Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Development in the Countryside Policy Area

- 3.8.1. The Local Plan seeks to meet the housing need of all its residents including the specialist accommodation needs of those gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople who have a traditional nomadic way of life requiring traveller caravan sites, which in turn requires a specific planning policy approach.
- 3.8.2. Local Plan Policy 11 Part C gives specific policy support for proposals for new sites to meet their needs where within the Countryside Policy Area subject to the following:

C) Proposals for new sites outside of development limits and the Green Belt will be supported where there is an unmet need established in the latest [Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople's Needs Assessment \(GTANA / TSPANNA\)](#), the sites are in accordance with the principles set out in **D and **F**, and the proposal is for:**

- 1. 5 or more pitches/yards** (provided the scale of the site would not dominate the nearest settled community²⁴); or
- 2. a smaller extension to, or intensification of, an existing well managed site;** or
- 3. a smaller site that makes effective use of [brownfield land](#).**

- 3.8.3. This policy was written to be consistent with the separate [National Planning Policy for Traveller Sites \(PPTS\)](#) part 4 of which is relevant to [decision-taking](#) on planning applications. Paragraph 25 of the PPTS does stress that:

“Local planning authorities should very strictly limit new traveller site development in open countryside that is away from existing settlements or outside areas allocated in the development plan. Local planning authorities should ensure that sites in rural areas respect the scale of, and do not dominate, the nearest settled community, and avoid placing an undue pressure on the local infrastructure.”

- 3.8.4. The [Gypsy, Traveller, and Travelling Showpeople's Needs Assessment \(GTANA / TSPANNA\)](#) is updated regularly by the Council²⁵.
- 3.8.5. The NPPF's Glossary defines [previously developed land](#) (otherwise known as brownfield land).
- 3.8.6. Policy 11 Part C also allows for the following:

Small extensions to, or intensification of, an existing well managed site may be supported where there is no overall unmet need, if there is a demonstrable need specific to the family on site, and the proposal accords with all other relevant parts of the policy.

²⁴ See also [Policy H / paragraph 25](#) of the national Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS).

²⁵ At the time of writing the latest is the [2022 Version](#) (which supersedes the 2018 version referred to in Local Plan Paragraph 6.22).

3.8.7. As stated in Policy 11 Part C, proposals must also be in accordance with the design requirements of Parts D and F of the Policy, the latter being related to transit pitches only:

- D) Proposals for new sites or pitches / yards will be required to demonstrate:**
- 1.** there will be **no significant harm to the built or natural heritage** including trees, hedgerows, and biodiversity
 - 2.** there will be **no significant harm to local amenity, infrastructure or agriculture;**
 - 3.** there is **safe and convenient access to the highway network;**
 - 4.** the **site is close to, or has good public access to, key services** including schools, medical facilities and shops;
 - 5.** there is **sufficient space for the planned number of caravans, commercial vehicles, play space, amenity blocks, parking and the safe movement of vehicles;** and
 - 6.** the **site is within, or can be well integrated into, the local townscape in a manner in keeping with the local character, using boundary treatments and screening materials which are sympathetic to the existing urban or rural form.** High fences or large walls should be avoided wherever possible to prevent the impression that the site is being deliberately separated from the rest of the community.
- F) Proposals for transit Gypsy and Traveller facilities will be required to show that:**
- 1.** there is a **demonstrable need** for such facilities
 - 2.** there **is convenient access to the road network;** and
 - 3.** the proposal meets the requirements of **D 1), 2), 3) and 6).**

3.8.8. As with all Local Plan policies, Policy 11 must be read in conjunction with other relevant Local Plan policies covering specific issues referred to (e.g. Part D1 will require compliance with relevant policies from Local Plan Chapter 10 (Green Infrastructure) and Chapter 11 (The Historic Environment)).

3.8.9. For applications for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Development in the Green Belt, see Section 4.7.

3.9. Equestrian Development

- 3.9.1. The erection of stables, associated tack rooms, feed stores and the installation of arenas in the Countryside Policy Area will require planning permission.
- 3.9.2. However, in terms of the Planning system, there is a distinction between the mere grazing of horses on agricultural land (which does not require planning permission for a change of use from agricultural land) and the use of land for the keeping of horses for some other purpose such as exercise or recreation (i.e. equestrian development). A planning application is normally required for the latter. Case law²⁶ has also found that:
- If horses are turned out on the land primarily for grazing, this is categorised as agricultural.
 - If horses are fed primarily by other means and use the land for exercise and some grazing, this is not categorised as agricultural.
- 3.9.3. If stables for horses are kept for the enjoyment of occupants of a dwelling, and not for commercial gain, they may be erected in a domestic curtilage²⁷ without applying for planning permission – subject to the restrictions which apply to outbuildings within the curtilage of a dwelling house (see [Class E of the General Permitted Development Order](#)).
- 3.9.4. Where permission is required, officers will take account of a range of factors such as the size, form and scale of what is proposed, its impact on the countryside, local amenity impacts and pollution risks. The Council will be unlikely to grant permission for stables if there is insufficient grazing land for the horses, or may limit the number of horses allowed to be kept. [The British Horse Society](#) recommends grazing land of 0.4 – 0.6ha per horse / pony (1 – 1.5 acres per horse / pony).

The Scale and Siting of Stables

- 3.9.5. The siting, scale and design of proposals must not adversely impact the quality of the landscape and, in particular, must not have a detrimental visual impact on the setting of listed buildings and conservation areas.
- 3.9.6. The number of stables should be proportional to the accommodation of reasonable equestrian leisure needs, balanced against the need to protect the character and landscape of the countryside. This might typically mean three or four stables, a tack room and a feed store.
- 3.9.7. In order to reduce the impact on landscape, stables, tack rooms and feed stores should all be situated in one block or a tight group of buildings, as opposed to dispersed across a site. Development should be designed to be sympathetic to the character of its surroundings. Ideally, it should be located close to the dwelling occupied by the person responsible for care of the horses. This will help minimise the

²⁶ Sykes v. Secretary of State for Environment (1981)

²⁷ See "[Curtilage](#)".

visual impact of the built form and provide both security and readily available care for the horses.

- 3.9.8. It may be possible to re-use existing buildings for stables, where the size and existing building character lends itself to conversion. Courtyard layouts and layouts with a strong relationship between buildings and an arena (existing or proposed) will be important in order to limit the impact on the landscape. In some very open or exposed areas, the visual impact of stables may be too great to be acceptable.
- 3.9.9. Proposals must not cause a nuisance to adjoining or neighbouring properties through smell, noise or disturbance. Appropriate planning conditions will be attached to permissions should they be needed to protect a sensitive landscape and / or the amenity of neighbouring properties, and may be used to regulate matters such as fencing, parking, lighting and siting of manure heaps.

The Appearance and Landscaping of Stables

- 3.9.10. Where new development is in an area with existing buildings, the new building should blend in with existing ones. Appropriate local materials should be used to enhance local distinctiveness. The appearance and design of new development should be in keeping with its use and sensitive to its surroundings – particularly if the setting of buildings of architectural or historical interest would be affected.
- 3.9.11. Structures built from timber and of a less permanent nature are generally preferable, although timber cladding to brickwork would also be acceptable.
- 3.9.12. Small field shelters with mono-pitch roof or shallow sloping roofs should typically be clad in green / grey mineral felt or corrugated sheeting. Colours for this type of roof should be muted and in a matt finish to reduce the degree of reflected glare in the landscape. If there are buildings or thick hedges on site, it may be possible to locate field shelters carefully in relation to these, rather than them being visibly isolated structures in the landscape.
- 3.9.13. Driveways and hardstanding, if required, should be limited, not intrusive, and considerate to the surrounding landscape. Gravel, rolled gravel or products which allow grass to grow through (grasscrete etc.) would help minimise visual impact.
- 3.9.14. Any vehicular access to the public highway must take account of highway safety considerations and should be achieved with as little destruction of trees and hedgerows as possible. New access to a highway will likely require planning permission.
- 3.9.15. Additional landscape planting may be needed to reduce the visual impact of the new development. Species that are harmful to horses such as privet, leylandii, yew, rhododendrons, azaleas and laurel should be avoided. If required, planting should be of native species which are appropriate in Doncaster's countryside.

Arenas

- 3.9.16. Artificially surfaced riding areas (arenas / manège) can appear alien and intrusive in the natural landscape. Care should be taken with siting and design to ensure they do not cause a harmful impact on the character of the landscape or neighbouring amenity.
- 3.9.17. Arenas usually measure 40 metres x 20 metres and their siting should be as inconspicuous as possible. They should be sited close to stables and other outbuildings to limit landscape impact and prevent unnecessary dispersal of buildings.
- 3.9.18. Landscaping impact can reduce the visual impact of arenas, although planting around an arena in an otherwise open landscape characterised by large open fields may be more harmful than no planting in certain circumstances. This will require careful consideration.
- 3.9.19. Tall external lighting columns or floodlights can be an incongruous feature in the countryside, and can also result in light pollution. External lighting (with the exception of inconspicuous safety or security lighting) will therefore not normally be acceptable.
- 3.9.20. If a floodlit arena is required, it should be inconspicuously sited to minimise the impact of lighting as well as the impact of the arena itself. Any proposed lighting scheme should be accompanied by a light spillage report and detailed plans to show the extent of the lighting, including its luminance, angle and deflection.
- 3.9.21. The parking of cars, trailers, lorries and caravans can have an undesirable impact on the countryside, particularly where it is otherwise open or undeveloped. The ability of the site to absorb such ancillary items should be taken into account. If planning permission is granted, it may be necessary to restrict what can be brought on to the site.
- 3.9.22. Finally, toilet facilities should be considered as part of the original development to prevent unsightly additional development in future.

Equestrian Centres, Livery Yards, Stud Farms, other Commercial Enterprises and Rescue Centres

- 3.9.23. The larger any development is, the greater the impact on the landscape will be, including both built form, and from associated vehicular movements and parking. The number of horses and the ways in which they are kept does affect the appearance and character of an area; in the case of larger, higher impact developments, siting and management needs to be well planned to limit any harm to the countryside.
- 3.9.24. To be a sustainable enterprise, it is likely that larger equestrian developments will require full time supervision and good access. Such development is best planned in conjunction with an existing dwelling in an accessible location.

- 3.9.25. It is common for livery yards and riding schools to attract large numbers of vehicles (to events etc.), which is acceptable in some locations but problematic in others, for example, where it causes congestion on narrow rural roads or shared accesses.

Information Requirements for Equestrian Related Planning Applications

- 3.9.26. Supporting Statements for equestrian related planning applications help facilitate their determination. This may include an assessment of the effect on the proposal on landscape, erosion, vegetation and/or rights of ways. Applications should be accompanied by information including:

- location and dimensions of any proposed structures and fencing
- materials proposed for structures and fencing;
- existing and/or proposed drainage systems;
- methods of storage (for example, feed, bedding, horseboxes, trailers);
- waste management plan for horse manure and bedding;
- access arrangements;
- lighting;
- hard and soft landscaping and surface materials;
- number of existing and proposed horses; and
- number of existing and proposed staff / employees (if applicable).
- if applicable. the level and nature of customer/visitor use (i.e. riding lessons, DIY livery and operating hours, facilities for breeding, training and site management, including deliveries and security)

- 3.9.27. If an application is approved, planning conditions may be applied:

- to require an appropriate conservation-based land management plan to achieve positive land management and prevent the harmful impacts of over-grazing such as poaching (loss of grass means soil is unprotected and broken down under animal's feet) and erosion.
- to restrict the use to a non-commercial/personal use, or for the domestic enjoyment of the applicant or their successors in title;
- in the case of permanent field shelters or stables on land where horses are predominantly still grazed, the 'equestrian' use may be limited to any permanent field shelters and stables and associated hardstanding and access, with the remaining field retained as grazing or agricultural land;
- to secure the ongoing operation of the site in accordance with a land management plan, Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) maintenance and management plans, waste management plans etc;
- to remove agricultural permitted development rights. This means all new fencing would require planning permission;
- to control any external lighting on site;
- limiting further development on small, constrained and/or over-grazed sites.

3.10. Policy 1, Part 5: 5 Year Housing Land Supply / Housing Delivery Test Failure

3.10.1. Local Plan Policy 1, Part 5 (Settlement Hierarchy – Countryside Policy Area) in part states:

If the Council is unable to demonstrate a deliverable five year housing land supply²⁸ across the Borough as a whole, or the Council fails the Government's Housing Delivery Test, residential development will also be supported in the Countryside Policy Area if all of the following criteria [..A to E..] are met:"

3.10.2. Whilst in such situations 'the presumption in favour of sustainable development' applies (NPPF [paragraph 11](#)), this policy gives a steer to where development proposals would be more favourably considered.

A) The site is adjacent to a Development Limit of a settlement in levels 1 – 3 [..as defined in Policy 1...]

3.10.3. Development Limits are as shown on the Local Plan's [Policies Map](#). Settlement levels 1-3 relate to the settlement hierarchy given in Local Plan Policy 1. This policy means that development would only be approved in non – Green Belt countryside (defined on the [Policies Map](#)) which can be broadly described as adjacent to:

- the 'Main Urban Area' (to the east of central Doncaster / East Coast Main Line);
- the 'Main Towns' (or parts thereof) surrounded by Countryside Policy Area (Armthorpe; Dunscroft, Dunsville, Hatfield & Stainforth; the east of Rossington; and Thorne & Moorends); and
- the 'Service Towns and Villages' surrounded by Countryside Policy Area (Auckley – Hayfield Green; Barnby Dun; the east of Bawtry; and Finningley).

3.10.4. Outside of these areas (i.e. in the Green Belt; adjacent to any 'Defined Village'; or in the Countryside Policy Area more widely), development would not be approved.

3.10.5. To be clear, "adjacent to" means it is physically adjoining the settlement that the proposal is related to but lying outside its defined development limit.

B) the development is consistent with the role and service function of the settlement in the settlement hierarchy.

3.10.6. When allocating housing sites to settlements in the Local Plan, the totals for each area were calculated appropriate to both the size of each individual settlement and its function / role within the Local Plan's 'Spatial Strategy'. This means more housing (including larger sites) were directed to the 'Main Urban Area' and 'Main Towns' (Levels 1 and 2 in the Settlement Hierarchy) as they are Doncaster's most sustainable settlements with the greatest number of services; they are therefore most able to meet the additional demands of new residents.

3.10.7. The 'Service Towns and Villages' (Level 3 of the Settlement Hierarchy) were allocated lower levels of housing (and smaller sites) because, although they are

²⁸ Information on the Council's latest 5 Year Deliverable Housing Land Supply is [available](#).

sustainable locations for growth, they generally have smaller existing populations and lower levels of service provision and facilities than the higher tier settlements.

- 3.10.8. Therefore, in the event of the Council being unable to demonstrate a deliverable 5 year supply of housing land, or in it failing the Housing Delivery Test, proposals adjacent to the settlements listed in paragraph 3.10.3 above should be commensurate with the role and service function of the settlement. This means (subject to wider considerations, including the other criteria of Policy 1, Part 5, that larger developments should only be proposed adjacent to the 'Main Urban Area' and 'Main Towns', whereas smaller and more modest development would be expected adjacent to the 'Service Towns and Villages'. This will ensure development is sustainable and appropriate to its location and the service provision of the settlement it is adjacent to.

C) The site is well related to the existing built form of the settlement and would represent a logical extension to the built up area or is of a scale and nature that is in keeping with the core shape, form and size of the settlement.

- 3.10.9. The settlement limits for each settlement in the City have been defined using a methodology. Some extensions to these would represent more logical extensions to a settlement than others. This might include 'rounding off' settlements, small extensions to these where the core shape is not affected, or appropriately sized extensions which utilise a feature (road, railway, watercourse etc.) to define their outer boundary, or do not weaken an existing well-defined boundary.
- 3.10.10. Proposals which protrude awkwardly into the Countryside Policy Area, detract from the core shape of the settlement or weaken existing strongly defined or linear settlement boundaries will not be looked upon favourably. As with Criterion B, the size should be commensurate with the role and function of the settlement and so large extensions to smaller settlements which would be more likely to impact a settlement's core shape would be very likely to be rejected on this basis.
- 3.10.11. Proposals must be well related to the existing built form. They should not create awkward extensions or poorly related 'island' development which bears no relationship to the existing settlement or adjacent dwellings, or which turns its back on it, or is detached from it.

D) The development will not cause significant harm to a settlement's character, setting and appearance (including partial or total coalescence with another settlement) or to the intrinsic character and beauty of the surrounding countryside.

- 3.10.12. Proposals should be mindful of the settlements character and be designed to be in keeping with its setting and mindful of its surroundings. Poorly designed development and proposals which bear little resemblance to the existing built form will be rejected. Similarly, development which impacts on the special or historic character of a settlement will be rejected.

- 3.10.13. The proposed development should not result in coalescence with any other settlement in the City, or the gap between settlements being reduced to such a degree that they partially coalesce, either physically or perceptually.
- 3.10.14. As per [NPPF Paragraph 180a](#) development should also not cause significant harm to the intrinsic character and beauty of the surrounding countryside (with any acceptable impacts on this kept to a minimum and mitigated against). In deciding applications care will be taken to not allow sporadic development which, by itself, and in conjunction with other such development, would lead to a gradual eroding of the intrinsic countryside character of an area.

E) It accords with other policies in the Local Plan.

- 3.10.15. To be acceptable development must still align with all other policies in the Local Plan, in addition to the above requirements of Policy 1 Part 5. A failure to demonstrate a 5 year supply, or failing the Housing Delivery Test, does not mean that sub-standard or “any” development will be acceptable. The Council will still expect high quality, well designed and carefully planned developments.

4. Development in the Green Belt

This section provides local interpretation of national NPPF Green Belt policy.

As explained at Paragraph 2.1.1, **the NPPF contains various policy relevant to rural development proposals in the countryside, be it designated as Green Belt or not.** However, **Green Belt policy takes precedence** – i.e. proposals in the Green Belt which are consistent with NPPF countryside policy must also be consistent with NPPF Green Belt policy. Put simply, there is a stricter level of control over new development in the Green Belt than other countryside.

Guidance included in [Section 3](#) for the Countryside Policy Area is referred to here where relevant to types of development proposals – but **this Section highlights the particular policy constraints that apply in Green Belt.**

4.1. Introduction

- 4.1.1. The Local Plan (via Policy 1, Part 6) defers to national policy for development proposals in the Green Belt.

The openness and permanence of Doncaster’s Green Belt (as indicated on the Key Diagram) and defined on the [Policies Map](#) **will be preserved.**

The general extent of the Green Belt will be retained. **Within the Green Belt, [national planning policy](#) will be applied including the presumption against inappropriate development except in very special circumstances.**

- 4.1.2. The Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. “The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their [openness](#) and their permanence” ([NPPF Paragraph 142](#)).
- 4.1.3. Green Belt serves 5 purposes ([NPPF Paragraph 143](#)):
- (a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
 - (b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
 - (c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
 - (d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
 - (e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.
- 4.1.4. [NPPF Paragraph 152](#) states that “inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in [very special circumstances](#)”.

- 4.1.5. [NPPF Paragraph 154](#) goes on to say that “a local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt.” Exceptions to this are listed in [Paragraph 154](#) (see Section 4.4 below for guidance).
- 4.1.6. [NPPF Paragraph 155](#) lists other forms of development are also not inappropriate in the Green Belt provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it (see Section 4.5 below for guidance).
- 4.1.7. Where proposals are therefore not in accordance with exceptions listed in paragraph 154 and 155, they will not be approved unless ‘[very special circumstances](#)’ can be proven (see [below](#)). Where they do accord with paragraphs 154 and 155, they are deemed to be appropriate development in the Green Belt and do not require very special circumstances to be demonstrated – although they are not therefore automatically acceptable development, and must still have to accord with other local and national policies.

4.2. Impact on the Openness of the Green Belt (NPPF paragraph 142)

- 4.2.1. “Openness” is not defined in the NPPF but case law has confirmed its assessment is a matter of planning judgement, not law²⁹.
- 4.2.2. [Planning Practice Guidance](#)³⁰ notes that assessing the impact of a proposal on the openness of Green Belt requires a judgement based on the circumstances of the case; and that case law has identified a number of matters which may need to be taken into account in making this assessment. These include, but are not limited to:
- openness is capable of having **both spatial and visual aspects** – in other words, the visual impact of the proposal may be relevant, as could its volume;
 - the **duration of the development, and its remediability** – taking into account any provisions to return land to its original state or to an equivalent (or improved) state of openness; and
 - the degree of activity likely to be generated, such as traffic generation.
- 4.2.3. When development is deemed to be ‘not inappropriate’ (i.e. it accords with [NPPF paragraph 154](#)), then applicants will not need to assess the impact of the proposal on the openness of the Green Belt (unless as specifically required to so by the NPPF in paragraphs [154b](#) and [g](#)).
- 4.2.4. Should an application fall under the types of development listed in [NPPF paragraph 155](#), then there is still a need to assess whether it will preserve the openness of the Green Belt and whether it conflicts with the [purposes](#) of including land within it.

²⁹ R (on the application of Samuel Smith Old Brewery (Tadcaster) and others) (Respondents) v North Yorkshire County Council (Appellant) [2020] UKSC 3 - The Supreme Court

³⁰ [PPG – Green Belt - 001 Reference ID: 64-001-20190722](#)

4.3. Demonstrating “Very Special Circumstances” (NPPF paragraphs 152 & 153)

- 4.3.1. The Council will give ‘substantial weight’ to any harm to the Green Belt caused by inappropriate development. When an application does not fall into one of the exceptions listed in NPPF paragraphs [152](#) and [153](#) (see Sections 4.4 and 4.5 below), it will be necessary to demonstrate ‘very special circumstances’.
- 4.3.2. According to [NPPF paragraph 153](#) “‘very special circumstances’ will not exist unless the **potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness**, and any **other harm resulting from the proposal**, is clearly **outweighed by other considerations**.”
- 4.3.3. There is no definition of what may constitute ‘very special circumstances’ and every case will be judged on its own merits, with a decision made based on planning judgement. Applicants are required to demonstrate how the need for their proposal, or the benefits it provides, constitute ‘very special circumstances’. This should be clearly set out in a detailed and thorough justification statement accompanying the planning application – it is not for the Council to be left to assume what these reasons might be.
- 4.3.4. Demonstrating ‘very special circumstances’ will require applicants to assess the proposed development against the [purposes of the Green Belt](#) (as set out in [NPPF paragraph 143](#)), as well as the impact of proposal on the [openness of the Green Belt](#) (see [above](#)).
- 4.3.5. Harm to the Green Belt will be assessed alongside any other harm resulting from the proposal from other considerations (such as highways, conservation, ecology, etc.) and will be weighed in the planning balance when deciding an application. If the totality of the harm is demonstrably and clearly outweighed by other considerations, then very special circumstances may be said to exist.
- 4.3.6. Please note that the “**other considerations**” to be weighed against harm to the Green Belt and other harm, need not be ‘very special’ in themselves. A number of fairly ordinary factors may be sufficient to outweigh the totality of harm. If they do, then ‘very special circumstances’ may exist.
- 4.3.7. Whilst each case has to be considered on its own merits and can vary with time and space (i.e. consideration is dependant on the particular merits of an application, its location and, to some extent, the time it is submitted – given Government policy can shift in emphasis), examples of what could be considered able to demonstrate ‘very special circumstances’ (noting these can’t be relied upon in terms of having set a precedent), include:
- **Renewable Energy Developments**: As specified in [NPPF Paragraph 156](#) “when located in the Green Belt, elements of many **renewable energy projects** will comprise inappropriate development. In such cases developers will need to demonstrate very special circumstances if projects are to proceed. Such **very special circumstances may include the wider environmental benefits associated with increased production of energy from renewable sources**.”

- **Isolated homes in the countryside.** NPPF Paragraphs [154c](#) and [155d](#) (as explained in sections 4.4 and 4.5 below) may be able to be used to justify proposals to create new dwellings via extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building ([154c](#)) or re-use of buildings of permanent and substantial construction ([155d](#)).

However, national Green Belt policy does not specifically refer to allowing the construction of new build dwellings (as opposed to conversion, extensions or alterations of existing buildings). Nevertheless, proposals fully consistent with [NPPF Paragraph 84](#) on isolated dwellings could in part amount to demonstrating “very special circumstances” – subject to demonstrating that potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by the need for the dwelling. Guidance given for Policy 25 on [interpreting NPPF Paragraph 84 on Isolated Homes](#) can also be used to help consider whether ‘very special circumstances’ for Green Belt proposals can be demonstrated.

- **New Non-Residential Development.** [NPPF Paragraphs 88 and 89](#) on supporting a prosperous rural economy is discussed in relation to [Policy 25, Part 4 \(New Non-Residential Development in the Countryside Policy Area\)](#) in Section 3.5.

Proposals fully consistent with [NPPF Paragraphs 88 and 89](#) could in part amount to demonstrating “very special circumstances” – subject to demonstrating that potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by the need for, or wider benefits from, the development. Economic benefit plus other site-specific circumstances may possibly meet the test.

4.3.8. Note: the above list of examples is not an exhaustive list.

4.4. Exceptions to Inappropriate Development in the Green Belt (NPPF paragraph 154)

4.4.1. Whilst, according to [NPPF paragraph 154](#), “a local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt, six exceptions are listed. These are:

- [154a: buildings for agriculture and forestry](#)
- [154b: appropriate facilities for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments](#)
- [154c: non-disproportionate building extension or alteration](#)
- [154d: replacement of a building](#)
- [154e: limited infilling in villages](#)
- [154f: limited affordable housing \[does not apply in Doncaster\]](#)
- [154g: limited infilling or redevelopment of previously developed land](#)

NPPF Paragraph 154a: buildings for agriculture and forestry

- 4.4.2. The exception allowed via [NPPF paragraph 154a](#) is “buildings for agriculture and forestry.”
- 4.4.3. [Section 336 of the Town and Country Planning Act](#)³¹ states:
- “agriculture” includes horticulture, fruit growing, seed growing, dairy farming, the breeding and keeping of livestock (including any creature kept for the production of food, wool, skins or fur, or for the purpose of its use in the farming of land), the use of land as grazing land, meadow land, osier land, market gardens and nursery grounds, and the use of land for woodlands where that use is ancillary to the farming of land for other agricultural purposes, and “agricultural” shall be construed accordingly.”*
- 4.4.4. There is no qualification attached to this exception; it should be read that all buildings for agriculture and forestry are appropriate development within the Green Belt irrespective of size, location or impact on openness.
- 4.4.5. However, whilst buildings for agriculture and forestry may not be “inappropriate development” in the Green Belt, this does not mean that any level of harm (e.g. visual impact) is irrelevant. Proposals must also be judged against other national and local policies, and therefore there may be harm arising from non – Green Belt issues which may still be relevant and taken into account when making a decision. Therefore, an application which falls into this category could still be refused even if deemed ‘not inappropriate’ in the Green Belt.
- 4.4.6. For horse-related development proposals, and whether or not they are classed as agricultural, see Section 3.9 on Equestrian Development.

NPPF Paragraph 154b: appropriate facilities for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries / burial grounds and allotments

- 4.4.7. The exception allowed via [NPPF paragraph 154b](#) relates to “the provision of **appropriate facilities** (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for **outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds** and **allotments**; as long as the facilities preserve the [openness](#) of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the [purposes](#) of including land within it”.
- 4.4.8. For the avoidance of doubt **appropriate facilities** can mean the change of use of land to one of the land uses listed in paragraph 154b (e.g. change of use of agricultural land to a new cemetery) and associated facilities normally required as part of such a land use. It can also relate to an existing use of one of the types listed in paragraph 154b. However, any facility should be restricted (for example, in terms of size) to what is absolutely necessary or ancillary to an existing, or newly proposed, land use. Other facilities which may be considered likely to attract users in their own right would not be appropriate. Particular care should be taken to ensure that any

³¹ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1990/8/section/336>

'[main town centre use](#)' (as defined in the [NPPF's glossary](#)) are reasonably limited to meeting the needs of the proposal. Furthermore, excessively large car parking provision will not be supported if considered likely to attract users in their own right to facilities – as opposed to just meeting the appropriate needs of the main proposed development.

- 4.4.9. In terms of outdoor sport and recreation it would be expected that activities would be mostly outdoor, not indoor. These could include, for example, car parking, storage units, changing rooms and toilets, club houses/pavilions, spectator areas, fencing and sports lighting. Horse related development in the Green Belt can be assessed against NPPF Paragraph 154b and the guidance given in Section 3.9. Any facility, or element of a proposal, not considered an appropriate facility will be required to demonstrate '[very special circumstances](#)'.
- 4.4.10. Applicants will need to consider secondary impacts of the proposal on the Green Belt. For example, the potential for the development to generate excessive traffic or car parking could render the proposal inappropriate due to the impact on [openness](#).
- 4.4.11. Applications for these types of development will be required to demonstrate they preserve the [openness](#) of the Green Belt. Restricting buildings or facilities to the minimum size required for their purposes will assist this but applicants may also need to carefully consider other ways to mitigate the impact of development; such as:
- Considering the location of the proposal and its position within a site;
 - Relationship to existing natural screening or provision of new landscaping and planting;
 - Considering whether other redundant buildings and structures could be demolished so as to off-set harm to openness.
- 4.4.12. It should be noted that there is no requirement to show that there would be no impact on the openness of the Green Belt, rather that the proposal preserves the openness.
- 4.4.13. Unlike the other exceptions to [NPPF Paragraph 154](#) (and like the exceptions allowed for via [NPPF Paragraph 155](#)), Paragraph 154b requires that the proposal does not conflict with the [purposes of the Green Belt](#).
- 4.4.14. There is no Government guidance on how to assess impact upon Green Belt purposes. The following is a suggested way to do this loosely based on the Green Belt review methodology used to help prepare the Local Plan but adapted to be applicable to individual planning applications.

Assessment of Impact on Purposes of the Green Belt

- (a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Site represents open land which is contiguous to, connected to, or in close proximity to, a 'large built up area' (defined as a settlement within Tiers 1-3 of the Local Plan's Settlement Hierarchy defined in Local Plan Policy 1).

- Site development would lead to sprawl of the built form which would not otherwise be restricted by a durable boundary (clearly defined boundary that uses physical features that are readily recognisable and likely to be permanent).
- Sprawl can be defined as the ““spreading out of built form over a large area in an untidy or irregular way”.

- (b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;

- Site development would result in merging, coalescence or significant erosion, both physical or visually, of a valued ‘gap’ between neighbouring settlements (defined as a settlement within Tiers 1-4 of the Local Plan’s Settlement Hierarchy defined in Local Plan Policy 1). Assessment can be based on reviewing the physical, visual and perceptual scale of the ‘gap’.
- Existing Green Belt boundary has resisted ‘ribbon development’ which would otherwise have resulted in the reduction of perceived separation between settlements; and how any new development would not in itself lead to ribbon development, or how any site boundary would be able to continue to resist further ‘ribbon development’ if planning permission is granted and implemented.

- (c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;

- Extent to which Green Belt features within the proposed development site have already been impacted by ‘encroachment’ of built form. This could be assessed by, for example, the % of existing built form on the site.
- Relative assessment of the pre-developed site’s ‘rural character’ versus ‘urban character’; including an analysis of how the sensitivity of the Green Belt site, and features within it, are important to the appreciation of the (in)ability of the countryside to accommodate change.

- (d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and

- Development site has a role in supporting the character of an historic town or place. Definition of ‘historic towns’ within Doncaster can be taken to include Doncaster, Conisbrough, Mexborough, Tickhill and Bawtry.
- Development site has a role in supporting views into and out of the historic core of a historic town or place.

- (e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

- As any site in the Green Belt arguably plays its part in preferably directing development elsewhere to within settlements (where opportunities for assisting urban regeneration, by recycling derelict and other urban land, are greater) then all sites in the Green Belt arguably contribute to this purpose.

NPPF Paragraph 154c: non-disproportionate building extension / alteration

- 4.4.15. The exception allowed via [NPPF paragraph 154c](#) relates to “the **extension or alteration** of a **building** provided that it does not result in **disproportionate** additions over and above the **size** of the **original building**”.
- 4.4.16. For the avoidance of doubt: ‘**building**’ in the context of paragraph 154c can be residential or non-residential.
- 4.4.17. There is no definition of “**disproportionate additions**” in the NPPF. The Oxford English Dictionary defines something in “proportion” as “*appropriate, fitting, or pleasing relation (of size, etc.) between things or parts of a thing; due relation of one part to another; balance, symmetry, harmony*”.³²
- 4.4.18. Paragraph 154c specifically refers to “**size**”, which could include volume, height, external dimensions, footprint, floorspace, visual perception or any combination of these.
- 4.4.19. The “**original building**” is defined in [Annex 2 of the NPPF](#) as: “A building as it existed on 1 July 1948 or, if constructed after 1 July 1948, as it was built originally.”
- 4.4.20. As there is no definition of “disproportionate additions” each application will be considered on its own merits using the Oxford English Dictionary Definition of “disproportionate”. The Council will assess factors such as the scale, bulk, massing and built form of the proposed development, looking for a design that avoids disproportionate additions.
- 4.4.21. Decisions should not just be made on the basis of a mathematical calculation of increased size. Local Plan [Policy 25 Part 2](#) does give policy on what is considered appropriate for extensions to existing dwellings in the Countryside Policy Area (40% compared to the [original](#) dwelling). However, no direct comparison should be made with [Local Plan Policy 25](#) when considering applications in the Green Belt. Nevertheless, if an applicant was to make such a comparison, given the stricter level of control over new development in the Green Belt (because of the fundamental aim of keeping land permanently open) it is reasonable that the decision maker should expect volume increases to be significantly less than 40%.
- 4.4.22. **Where the proposal relates to an existing dwelling** (i.e. not a non-residential building), in assessing impact, it can be appropriate for applications in the Green Belt to also take into account the consequences of any existing outbuildings and permitted development rights³³ in identifying the “original building” (as discussed in

³² <https://www.oed.com/>

³³ [Schedule 2, Part 1, Class E of the General Permitted Development Order](#) are not restricted in the Green Belt.

Section 3.3 relating to applications for extensions to dwellings in the Countryside Policy Area) but only where they are [incidental to the enjoyment of the existing dwellinghouse](#)). Paragraphs 3.3.16 to 3.3.18 (exclusively) of Section 3.3 are therefore **also applicable to Green Belt proposals assessed against NPPF Paragraph 154c**.

- 4.4.23. **Where the proposal relates to an existing non-residential building (i.e. not a dwelling)**, in identifying the ‘original building’ it may be appropriate to take into any other buildings related to the building in question when assessing whether their retention or demolition influences whether the building’s alterations or extensions appear disproportionate.

NPPF Paragraph 154d: replacement of a building

- 4.4.24. The exception allowed via [NPPF paragraph 154d](#) relates to “the **replacement** of a **building**, provided the new building is in the **same use** and **not materially larger** than the one it replaces”.
- 4.4.25. For the avoidance of doubt: ‘**building**’ in the context of paragraph 154d can be residential or non-residential
- 4.4.26. As the new building must be in the **same use** NPPF Paragraph 154d does not apply where the proposal involves a change of use, for example the replacement of an agricultural barn to a dwelling
- 4.4.27. There is no definition in the NPPF of what constitutes “**materially larger**”. The Oxford English dictionary defines “materially” as “to a material or important extent; significantly, substantially, considerably”.
- 4.4.28. As with proposals to extend and/or alter buildings in the Green Belt ([NPPF Paragraph 154c](#)) there is no defined amount by which a building’s size might increase before it is deemed materially larger. Consistent with the guidance given in paragraph 4.4.21 above, no direct comparison should be made with Local Plan Policy 25 for the reasons previously stated.
- 4.4.29. Assessing “materially larger” will be a matter of judgement based on the evidence of each case. Proposals should be of a similar scale to the building being replaced, the principle being the lower the increase the better. Appeal decisions have concluded that volumetric increases of 10%³⁴ have been deemed inappropriate; even small increases could result in development which is materially larger than that which it replaces. If a replacement building is materially larger than the building it is replacing, [very special circumstances](#) will be required.
- 4.4.30. **If the building has been demolished prior to the application**, then there is technically nothing existing to replace and so NPPF paragraph 154d will not apply. For something to be considered as a replacement, the element that it replaces must exist at the time the replacement development is considered³⁵. Technically, in such

³⁴ [Reference: APP/C2741/W/19/3242886 \(planninginspectorate.gov.uk\)](#)

³⁵ [Reference: APP/J1915/W/20/3254917 \(planninginspectorate.gov.uk\)](#)

situations, and when the site meets the NPPF Annex’s definition of being ‘[previously developed land](#)’, proposals may be more likely of being considered not-inappropriate via the separate exception allowed under [NPPF Paragraph 154g](#) (see [below](#)).

NPPF Paragraph 154e: limited infilling in Green Belt villages

- 4.4.31. The exception allowed via [NPPF paragraph 154e](#) relates to “**limited infilling in villages**”.
- 4.4.32. There is no definition in the NPPF of what constitutes “**limited infilling**”. A generally accepted definition of “infilling” is “a small gap in an otherwise built-up frontage”. “Limited”, whilst not defined mathematically, can apply to both the size of the gap to be “infilled” and the scale of what is proposed to be developed. Infilling implies the development of a site that is between existing buildings.
- 4.4.33. For the avoidance of doubt, to be a **Green Belt village** excludes any settlement with a defined Development Limit as shown on the [Local Plan's Policies Map](#). Inside these settlement policies will be considered against relevant policies of the Local Plan such as Policy 10 (Residential Policy Areas).
- 4.4.34. Outside of these defined settlements, there are some areas of housing which have been “washed over” by Green Belt designation. Crucial to the application of NPPF paragraph 154e policy is deciding whether land within these areas is deemed to be a “village” or not.
- 4.4.35. The Oxford English dictionary defines a village as:
- “a collection of dwelling-houses and other buildings, forming a centre of habitation in a country district; an inhabited place larger than a hamlet and smaller than a town, or having a simpler organization and administration than the latter”*
- 4.4.36. It goes on to define a hamlet (i.e. not a village) as:
- “a group of houses or small village in the country; esp. a village without a church, included in the parish belonging to another village or a town”*
- 4.4.37. Although the Local Plan’s “defined villages” (Local Plan Policy 1 Part 4) have boundaries defined by development limits there could be opportunities for limited infilling immediately adjacent to them based on the form of the village ‘on the ground’; for example, where a small gap lies between the defined village development limit and other buildings which have been “washed-over” by Green Belt notation. Whilst not technically “in” a village, it may still nevertheless be appropriate for limited infilling³⁶.
- 4.4.38. When considering applications against NPPF Paragraph 154e it will be for the case officer to decide, based on the above, whether the proposal can be said to be in a “village”.

³⁶ Julian Wood v SoS and Gravesham Borough Council (2025] EWCA Civ 195

4.4.39. Subject to it being satisfied that the proposal constitutes limited infilling, there is no further test (such as impact on openness) to meet, in the way exceptions [154b](#) and [154g](#) require. However, development policies would still need to satisfy other Local Plan policies (such as its design policies given in Chapter 12 covering issues such as impact on countryside character and landscape etc.)

NPPF Paragraph 154f: limited affordable housing

4.4.40. The exception normally allowed via [NPPF paragraph 154f](#) relates to “**limited affordable housing** for local community needs **under policies set out in the development plan** (including policies for rural exception sites³⁷).

4.4.41. This exception does not apply in Doncaster. This NPPF sub paragraph refers to allowing development where specific policy for this type of exception are included **in the development plan**. None of the other exceptions given in NPPF paragraphs 154 or 155 are written with this proviso; and there is no requirement in the NPPF to have such a policy.

4.4.42. Doncaster’s Local Plan does not contain any such policy. This form of exceptional development has not delivered any significant provision in Doncaster and, as part of Local Plan preparation, it was considered that such a specific policy for Doncaster was not needed.

4.4.43. For the avoidance of doubt, this includes any form of rural exception site, including:

- Exception Sites for community-led development ([NPPF Paragraph 73](#)) (which in any event is specifically excluded from being allowed in the Green Belt virtue of [NPPF Footnote 38](#)); and
- ‘First Homes’ Exception Sites (which as a result of transitional arrangements confirmed in a Written Ministerial Statement³⁸ mean that the Doncaster Local Plan did not need to include a policy on First Homes exceptions sites meaning that “the First Homes requirements will also not need to be applied when considering planning applications in the plan area until such time as the requirements are introduced through a subsequent update [to the Local Plan]).”

4.4.44. Affordable housing may be allowed in the Green Belt if accordance with NPPF Paragraph 154g (see [next](#)).

NPPF Paragraph 154g : redevelopment of ‘previously developed land’.

4.4.45. The exception allowed via [NPPF paragraph 154g](#) allows for “**limited infilling** or the partial or complete redevelopment of **previously developed land**, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would:

³⁷ See also: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/housing-needs-of-different-groups#rural-exception-sites>

³⁸ <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2021-05-24/hcws50>, 24 May 2021

- not have a greater impact on the **openness** of the Green Belt than the existing development; or
- not cause substantial harm to the **openness** of the Green Belt, where the development would **re-use previously developed land** and contribute to meeting an **identified affordable housing need** within the area of the local planning authority.

4.4.46. As explained in relation to [NPPF Paragraph 154e](#) in paragraph 4.4.32 above there is no definition in the NPPF of what constitutes “**limited infilling**”. A generally accepted definition of “infilling” is “a small gap in an otherwise built-up frontage”. “Limited”, whilst not defined mathematically, can apply to both the size of the gap to be “infilled” and the scale of what is proposed to be developed. Infilling implies the development of a site that is between existing buildings. In the context of 154g infilling need not be restricted to just a small gap in a otherwise built up frontage and can be wider in scope within the confines of a previously developed site, each case being considered on its own merits.

4.4.47. “**Previously developed land**” is defined in [Annex 2](#) of the NPPF.

4.4.48. When considering impact upon openness, refer to guidance in Section 4.2. It should be noted that the assessment of openness impact or harm must be assessed based on the site as it is. Therefore, if there were buildings which have subsequently been demolished these should not be a consideration of the planning application.

4.4.49. In considering whether the proposal would contribute to meeting an **identified affordable housing need**, applicants should, in the first instance, engage with the Council’s strategic housing team.

4.5. Other forms of development (NPPF paragraph 155)

4.5.1. In addition to the exceptions listed in [NPPF paragraph 154](#), [NPPF paragraph 155](#) states that “certain other forms of development are also not inappropriate in the Green Belt provided they preserve its [openness](#) and do not conflict with the [purposes](#) of including land within it. These are:

- [155a: mineral extraction](#)
- [155b: engineering operations](#)
- [155c: local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location;](#)
- [155d: the re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction](#)
- [155e: material changes in the use of land \(such as changes of use for outdoor sport or recreation, or for cemeteries and burial grounds\)](#)
- [155f: development, including buildings, brought forward under a Community Right to Build Order or Neighbourhood Development Order.](#)

4.5.2. For all of the following exceptions, refer to Section 4.2 for advice on how to assess impact upon [openness](#) and 4.4.14 on how to assess impact upon Green Belt

[purposes](#). These forms of development are largely self-explanatory but the following points should be noted.

NPPF Paragraph 155a: mineral extraction

- 4.5.3. Proposals will also be considered against [NPPF Chapter 17](#) and relevant Local Plan Policies 61 – 64.

NPPF Paragraph 155b: engineering operations

- 4.5.4. There is limited guidance in the [Town and Country Planning Act 1990](#) as to the scope of “engineering operations”. The normally accepted criterion is that they are those which are normally undertaken by persons carrying on business as an engineer. Engineering operations can be defined as any activities involving the construction, alteration, or maintenance of engineering works. This includes the construction of bridges, tunnels, dams, and other civil engineering structures, as well as the installation and maintenance of pipelines, cables, and other infrastructure.

NPPF Paragraph 155c: local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location

- 4.5.5. This could, for example, include a bus/cycle interchange and pedestrian/cycle connections connected with a proposed bridge. Proposals should also have regard to all other relevant policies in the plan.

NPPF Paragraph 155d: the re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction

- 4.5.6. In demonstrating whether an existing **building** is of “permanent and substantial construction”. A [structural assessment](#) and potentially a [conversion method statement](#), both carried out by a suitably qualified professional³⁹. Guidance given for Policy 25, Part 1: Re-use and Conversion of Buildings should also be followed for relevant proposals considered under NPPF Paragraph 155d.

NPPF Paragraph 155e: material changes in the use of land (such as changes of use for outdoor sport or recreation, or for cemeteries and burial grounds)

- 4.5.7. Note that the use of the wording “such as” in NPPF 155e means that the list of uses given are just examples. They are not an exhaustive list; others may be possible but, as with the other exceptions of NPPF Paragraph 155, they must still preserve the [openness](#) of the Green Belt and not conflict with the [purposes](#) of including land within it.
- 4.5.8. It should be noted that even if a building does fall into a category where it constitutes appropriate development in the Green Belt, it does not mean it will therefore

³⁹ Whilst the Council cannot insist on a truly independent assessment, less weight will be given to assessments which are clearly so biased in favour of an application to make it inappropriate to informing planning decisions. The Council may choose to commission its own assessment.

necessarily be approved – it must still also be judged against other local and national policies.

NPPF Paragraph 155f: development, including buildings, brought forward under a Community Right to Build Order or Neighbourhood Development Order.

- 4.5.9. A [Community Right to Build Order](#) is an Order made by the local planning authority (under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) that grants planning permission for a site-specific development proposal or classes of development. A [Neighbourhood Development Order](#) is an Order made by a local planning authority (under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) through which parish councils and neighbourhood forums can grant planning permission for a specific development proposal or classes of development. At the time of writing neither of these exist in Doncaster.

4.6. Renewable Energy Projects in the Green Belt (NPPF paragraph 156)

- 4.6.1. [NPPF paragraph 156](#) states that “when located in the Green Belt, **elements of many renewable energy projects will comprise inappropriate development**. In such cases developers will need to demonstrate [very special circumstances](#) if projects are to proceed. Such very special circumstances **may** include the wider environmental benefits associated with increased production of energy from renewable sources.”
- 4.6.2. Proposals will need to demonstrate compliance with Green policy on preserving [openness](#), not conflicting with the [purposes](#) of Green Belt and, where necessary, demonstrating ‘[very special circumstances](#)’.
- 4.6.3. Specifically for **wind energy developments**, Local Plan Policy 59 and the [Policies Map](#) include an ‘area of search for wind energy development’ which excludes any land within Doncaster’s Green Belt. This area of search was prepared consistent with NPPF footnote 58 (related to NPPF paragraph 163 b) which states that
- “Except for applications for the repowering of existing wind turbines, a proposed wind energy development involving one or more turbines should not be considered acceptable unless it is in an area identified as suitable for wind energy development in the development plan; and, following consultation, it can be demonstrated that the planning impacts identified by the affected local community have been fully addressed and the proposal has their backing.”*
- 4.6.4. This does not exclude a [very special circumstances](#) argument being made, but the combination of NPPF paragraphs [156](#), [163](#) and Local Plan Policy 59 mean, in reality, it is a very high bar to be able to pass for wind energy development applications in Doncaster’s Green Belt to be approved.

4.7. Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Development in the Green Belt

- 4.7.1. For applications for Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Development in the Countryside Policy Area, see Section 3.8.

- 4.7.2. For these types of proposals, local planning policy on Green Belt defers to national policy in the NPPF and the separate [National Planning Policy for Traveller Sites \(PPTS\)](#). Whilst Local Plan Policy 11 (Parts D, E and F (and, for clarity, not Parts A, B and C)) are relevant to Green Belt proposals, any proposals must be consistent with NPPF and PPTS policy which requires quite stringent conditions to be met.
- 4.7.3. [Paragraph 4d](#) of the PPTS states that one of the Government's aims in respect of traveller sites is that "decision-taking should protect Green Belt from [inappropriate development](#)."
- 4.7.4. [Policy E of the PPTS](#) repeats [NPPF paragraph 152](#), that "inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances", and goes on to state that:
- "Traveller sites (temporary or permanent) in the Green Belt are inappropriate development. Subject to the best interests of the child, personal circumstances and unmet need are unlikely to clearly outweigh harm to the Green Belt and any other harm so as to establish very special circumstances."*
- 4.7.5. This is reiterated in [PPTS paragraph 24](#).
- 4.7.6. [PPTS paragraph 27](#) also notes that, whilst failure to demonstrate an up-to-date 5 year supply of deliverable sites is a significant material consideration when determining applications for temporary planning permission, proposals in the Green Belt are an exception to this.
- 4.7.7. Permitting either permanent or temporary development of this type in the Green Belt (including extensions of existing sites onto Green Belt land) would therefore conflict with national policy. This is not to say a '[very special circumstances](#)' argument cannot be made for traveller sites in the Green Belt, but that personal circumstances and unmet need alone are unlikely to constitute a very special circumstances argument.
- 4.7.8. In such cases where there may be a justification which would allow for this type of development in the Green Belt, the use of a personal and / or temporary permission will be considered, including conditions related to the remediation of the site so as not to impact on the long term openness of the land.
- 4.7.9. It should also be noted that the Government has confirmed, in a [Written Ministerial Statement](#)⁴⁰, that where there has been intentional unauthorised development on land, this will be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. The Written Ministerial Statement specifically notes the Government is concerned about intentional unauthorised development in the Green Belt.
- 4.7.10. Paragraph 6.23 to Local Plan Policy 11 confirms that "authorised [...Gypsies, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople...] sites in the Green Belt have been removed from the Green Belt and allocated as "Green Belt Traveller Sites" on the [Policies](#)

⁴⁰ [Written statements - Written questions, answers and statements - UK Parliament](#), 17 December 2015

[Map](#), and in Table 11. These sites are allocated for this use only and no alternate uses other than as a Gypsy and Traveller site are acceptable.

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