

GLOUCESTER AND CHELTENHAM GREEN BELT

Land Area: 7,492 hectares

(0.5% of total green belt land, 0.06% of the total land area of England)



What kind of place is the Gloucester & Cheltenham Green Belt?

- Its purpose is to **protect the open character** of the land between Gloucester and Cheltenham and to prevent them from merging.
- It has the **highest density of public rights of way** of all of England's Green Belts.
- It is typical of England as a whole in terms of being **mostly arable and grassland**, but with proportionally more improved grassland and less woodland
- **93%** of the landscape is being **transformed or eroded** in relation to its established **character**.

Green Belts:

Total area of all Green Belts in England is **1.6 million ha** (13% of England's total land area)

Green Belt fact sheets covered in this series:

England

Avon

Burton/Swadlincote

Cambridge

Gloucester/Cheltenham

Hampshire/Dorset

London (Metropolitan)

North West

Nottingham/Derby

Oxford

South & West Yorkshire

Stoke-on-Trent

Tyne & Wear

West Midlands

York

These fact sheets support the reports:

- Nature Conservation and Recreational Opportunities in the Green Belt (2016); with ADAS
- Green Belts: A Greener Future (2010); a joint report with Natural England

Download the reports from www.cpre.org.uk

Nature conservation*



45 ha are registered as **Sites of Special Scientific Interest**, all of which are in a favourable or recovering position.

5 priority habitats cover 479 ha.

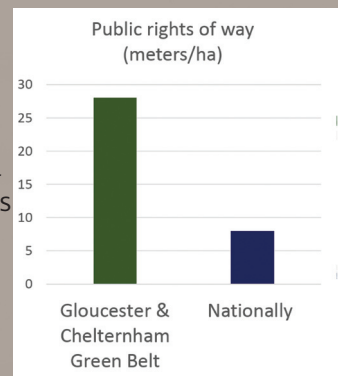
7% (compared with 8% of land nationally), or 480 hectares of the land area is **broadleaf and mixed woodland**.†

Public access and recreation*



There is 211 km of public rights of way. This represents the **highest density of public rights of way** across all Green Belts at 28 metres per hectare.

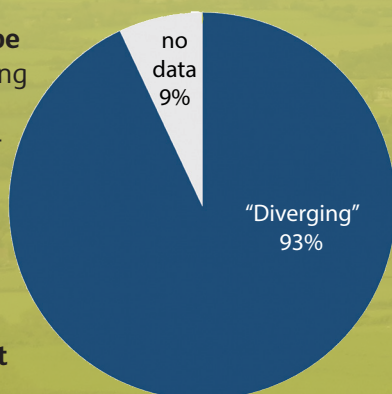
38 ha of open access land, 57 ha of Country Parks.



Landscape quality†



93% of the landscape is 'diverging', meaning transforming from its established character or eroding. Particular issues are the **changing character of agricultural land** and holdings and **pressure for new built development**.



14.5% (970 ha) of the Green Belt coincides with the **Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty** (AONB). Compared to 16% (nearly 2.1 million ha) total AONB cover in England.

Agriculture†



9% is Grade 1, Grade 2 or the 'best and most versatile' **agricultural land**. Compared with 17% of land nationally.

90% (5,997 ha) is **currently in agricultural use**, compared with 71% of land nationally.

45% of the total agricultural land‡ is subject to Natural England funding '**agri-environment schemes**'. (67% of agricultural land nationally, and 53% of all Green Belt agricultural land, is subject to agri-environment schemes).

Green Belt threats snapshot

Local Plans (Source: CPRE, State of the Green Belt 2018)

The number of homes proposed in the Green Belt across Cheltenham, Gloucester and Tewkesbury has risen to **10,280**. Up to **35%** of these homes could be affordable if local plan targets are met. CPRE's 2017 research revealed that the Government is set to provide councils in the area with almost £68 million through the New Homes Bonus as a result of these proposals.

Planning Applications (Source: Glenigan, in CPRE's State of the Green Belt 2018)

Since April 2009, 861 houses have been approved in this Green Belt, with almost 200 of these being approved in the last year alone. Shockingly, 639 (74%) of which have been on greenfield sites. There has been an increase since the publication of the National Planning Policy Framework in March 2012, from 58 dwellings per annum to 90 on greenfield sites in the Green Belt.

Only 22% of the total homes approved in the green belt are planned to be affordable, although for greenfield sites alone the proportion is slightly higher at almost 29%. All of the affordable homes have been delivered since the introduction of the NPPF.

*These figures are from CPRE's report with ADAS, *Nature Conservation and Recreational Opportunities in the Green Belt* (2016)

†These figures are from CPRE and Natural England's report *Green Belt: A Greener Future* (2010)

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