

NORTH WEST GREEN BELT

Land Area: 259,957 hectares

(16.2% of total green belt land and 2% of the total land area of England)

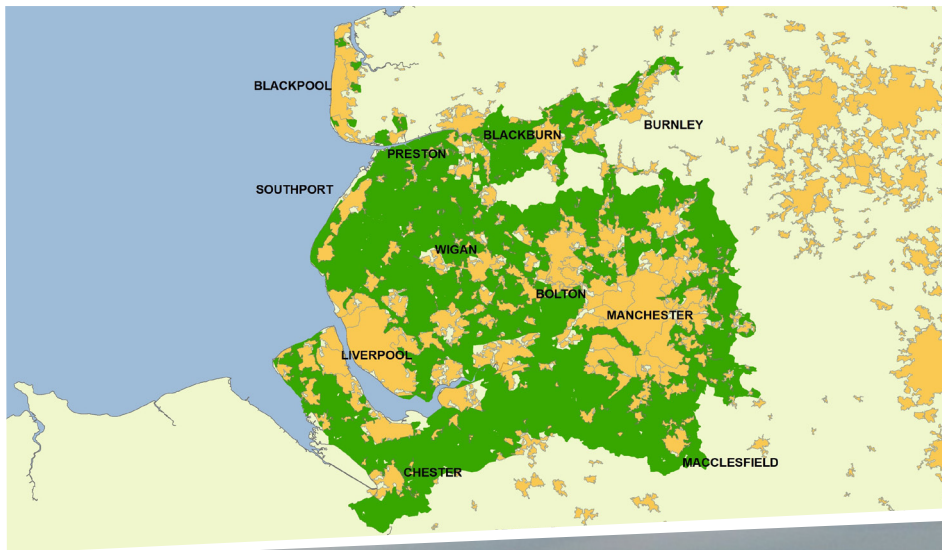


Photo credit: Philip Brandwood

What kind of place is the North West Green Belt?

- **Prevents the uncontrolled growth** of the built up areas in the North West and the merging of settlements, as well as **preserving the identity and character** of the settlements that make up the Greater Manchester and Merseyside conurbations.
- Has **the most Grade 1 agricultural land** (the very best quality) than any other Green Belt, which makes up 8% of all of England's Grade 1 land
- This Green Belt has the **greatest variety of priority habitats** of any Green Belt
- Contains the **largest proportion of public rights of way** that any other Green Belt aside from the London Metropolitan Green Belt

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*



20 priority habitats cover 32,628 ha, representing 12% of the Green Belt. They have more variety than any other Green Belt

11,877ha (5%) are registered as **Sites of Special Scientific Interest**, a 60% increase since 2009. There are 2,555 ha of Local Nature Reserves, with 16 new sites designated since 2009.

4,493 ha is owned by the National Trust, 1,109 ha by the Woodland Trust and 904 ha by RSPB.

24,733 ha (9%), of the land area is **broadleaf and mixed woodland**.[†]

Public access and recreation*



There is the **most (591km) National Cycle Network** compared to all other Green Belts

There are **23 meters of public rights of way per ha**

Almost 50% of the Green belt (128,650 ha) has **community forest designation**

4,731 ha of Country Parks (**11% of the total area of country parks across England**) and 4,711 ha is Registered (historic) Park and Garden. There are 9,843 ha of Open Access land.

Agriculture[†]



22% is Grade 1, Grade 2 or the 'best and most versatile' **agricultural land**, with the highest amount of Grade 1 land of any Green Belt. Compared with 17% of land nationally.

69%, or 171,914 ha, is **currently in agricultural use**.

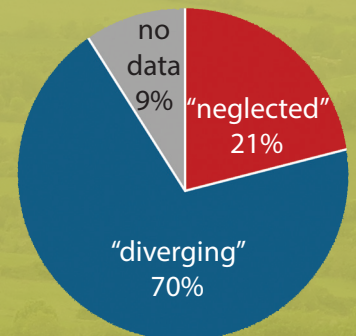
48% of the total agricultural land[‡] is subject to Natural England funding '**agri-environment schemes**', compared to 67% of agricultural land

Landscape quality[†]

Strong areas of management include trees, woodland and rivers

Areas of concern are agricultural quality, field boundaries and historic features.

70% of the landscape is "diverging" or transforming in character, while 21% of the area is classified as "neglected".



Green Belt threats snapshot

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

97,198 houses proposed in the Green Belt in local plans, up from 86,000 in 2017. This includes the first draft of the Manchester Spatial Framework, which suggested that around 50,000 homes would need to be developed in Green Belt, despite Manchester having **16 years worth of housing land supply in appropriate brownfield sites** (Source: CPRE, State of Brownfield 2018).

Only up to **28.5%** (17,247) of the homes proposed **could be affordable** if local plan targets are achieved.

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

Since 2009, **11,314 houses have been approved** in the North West Green Belt, 26% (2,939) of these are on greenfield sites. There has been a significant increase in the average annual number of homes approved from 675 to 1,716 (138 to 454 on greenfield sites) between 2017 and the introduction of the National Planning Policy Framework. There has also been a **500% increase in the number of major planning applications being approved on greenfield sites** in the Green Belt.

Despite approved planning applications on greenfield sites stating they would deliver an average of 35% affordable housing, between 2012 and 2017, the proportion of **affordable homes delivered in reality was less than 10% on greenfield sites**.

*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.