

A question has been submitted in advance for the Cabinet Member (Planning, Business Support and Regeneration) - Councillor Flannery from A Lloyd.

After yet another application of development on chain house lane nurseries. When will continued creep developments onto greenbelt be stopped in the Whitestake/New Longton area?

Response

National policy in relation to development in the Green Belt is mirrored in Policy G1 of the South Ribble Local Plan.

Policy G1–Green Belt

The area covered by Green Belt is shown on the Policies Map.

As set out in the NPPF, planning permission will not be given for the construction of new buildings unless there are very special circumstances.

Exceptions to this are:

- a) buildings for agriculture and forestry;
- b) provision of appropriate facilities for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation and for cemeteries, as long as it preserves the openness of the Green Belt and does 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**, and limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in this Local Plan; or
- f) limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed sites (brownfield land), whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it than the existing development.

As you'll note this Policy allows for limited infilling in villages within Green Belt.

When this policy was first introduced, the Council tried to implement a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) setting out what we would consider as working definitions of limited infill and what constitutes a village. Unfortunately, when we sought Counsel advice on this, they considered it overly prescriptive, created new planning policy (which an SPD cannot do) and the legal advice concluded that the Council should consider each planning application for residential development on its own merits.

The Council subsequently refused planning permission for several applications for proposals that it did not consider to be genuine infill development. Unfortunately, the Council decision in each case was overturned on appeal by independent Inspectors appointed by the Planning Inspectorate. It was clear from the Inspectors decision letters that the Planning Inspectorate were/are applying a much broader definition of what can qualify as an infill plot than the Council. Equally they were/are adopting a different view as to what constitutes a village in that it was held that a village can be no more than a small cluster of dwellings.

Against this backdrop of planning appeal decisions, which are material planning considerations, the Council was left with no real option but to consider the infill developments in Whitestake/New Longton as Policy compliant and consequently grant planning permission. The Council will be bound by the same policy constraints when dealing with similar proposals in the future until such time as there is a change of policy at National Level.

The Council is however, currently in the process of reviewing its adopted Local Plan. As part of that exercise the Council will look at whether there is some means through a new Local Plan of addressing some of the issues of concern and give the Council a greater element of control.