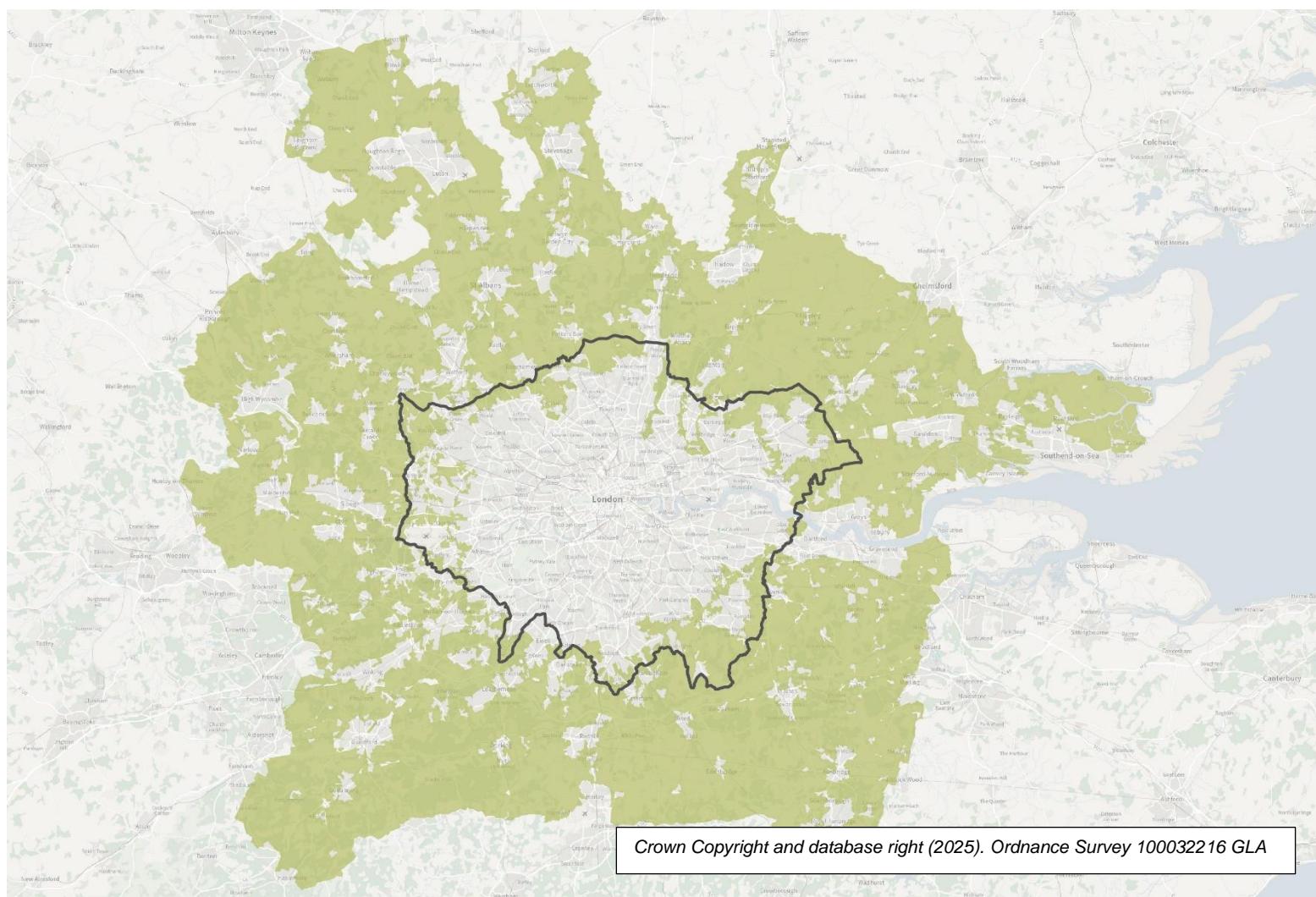


# London's Green Belt

Will Weihermüller and Meghan Doyle

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**LONDON ASSEMBLY**

**Research Unit**

## Overview

London's metropolitan Green Belt is a designated area of open land around the capital that extends into the wider Southeast. It has an area of 5,085km, most of which sits outside the Greater London boundary. It is underpinned by planning policy in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which aims to prevent urban sprawl and to protect the countryside.

With recent revisions to the NPPF and new housing targets for London, the Mayor of London has commissioned a review of the Green Belt land which falls within Greater London. This will be used as part of the evidence base to inform the next London Plan.

This paper provides key information about London's Green Belt, including its history, benefits and challenges, and the implications of potential policy developments.

# About the Research Unit

The London Assembly Research Unit provides an impartial research and information service. We undertake research and analysis on key issues in London to inform the Assembly's work.

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# Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction and history.....</b>	<b>5</b>
1.1	History of the Green Belt .....	6
<b>2</b>	<b>How current policy addresses London's Green Belt.....</b>	<b>9</b>
2.1	Mayoral Strategies.....	10
	London Environment Strategy (2018).....	10
	London Housing Strategy (2018).....	11
	London Plan (2021) .....	11
2.2	National Planning Policy Framework (2024).....	12
	The grey belt.....	13
	The Golden Rules.....	14
2.3	Towards a new London Plan (2025).....	15
<b>3</b>	<b>Views on the Green Belt.....</b>	<b>17</b>
3.1	Urban sprawl.....	17
3.2	Health and wellbeing .....	18
3.3	Food and farming.....	19
3.4	Climate change.....	21
3.5	House supply and prices .....	22
<b>4</b>	<b>What's next for the Green Belt? .....</b>	<b>26</b>
4.1	The next London Plan.....	26
4.2	Homes for London .....	27
4.3	The New Towns Taskforce .....	27
	<b>Other formats and languages .....</b>	<b>28</b>

# 1 Introduction and history

The Green Belt is a planning policy which aims to prevent urban sprawl and to protect the countryside. It has five core purposes as laid out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). These are:

- 1) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas
- 2) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another
- 3) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment
- 4) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns
- 5) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.<sup>1</sup>

Reforms to the NPPF in December 2024 represented a significant shift in the UK government's historic approach to Green Belt planning policy. Prior to this, development on the Green Belt had been severely restricted, with only certain types of development allowed. This included buildings for agricultural purposes, the replacement of an existing building and limited affordable housing for local community needs.<sup>2</sup> Following the NPPF reforms, the development of homes, commercial and other development is permittable on Green Belt land if it meets certain criteria. Such criteria stipulate that the development would "utilise grey belt land", be "in a sustainable location" and that "there is a demonstrable unmet need for the type of development proposed".<sup>3</sup> In addition, such developments are required to meet the 'Golden Rules', as identified in the NPPF, with a focus on provision of affordable housing, improvements to local and national infrastructure and provision of green space (more on this can be found in [section 2](#)).<sup>4</sup>

Since regional plans were abolished in 2011, setting the boundaries of Green Belts falls to local boroughs. Local planning authorities, in consultation with communities, must prepare a local plan, which sets out a vision and framework for the future development of an area.<sup>5</sup> Boroughs are allowed to change Green Belt boundaries during the local plan review process, however NPPF guidance specifies that this should only happen in exceptional circumstances. The NPPF also specifies which types of planning applications boroughs can approve on Green Belt land.

England currently has around 16,384km<sup>2</sup> of Green Belt land, accounting for roughly 12.6 per cent of land. At 5,085km<sup>2</sup>, the Green Belt surrounding London is the largest in England, more than twice the size of the next three largest Green Belts of Merseyside and Greater Manchester (2,477km<sup>2</sup>), South and West Yorkshire (2,465km<sup>2</sup>), and Birmingham (2,266km<sup>2</sup>).<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> MHCLG, [National Planning Policy Framework](#), (2024)

<sup>2</sup> MHCLG, [National Planning Policy Framework](#), (2024)

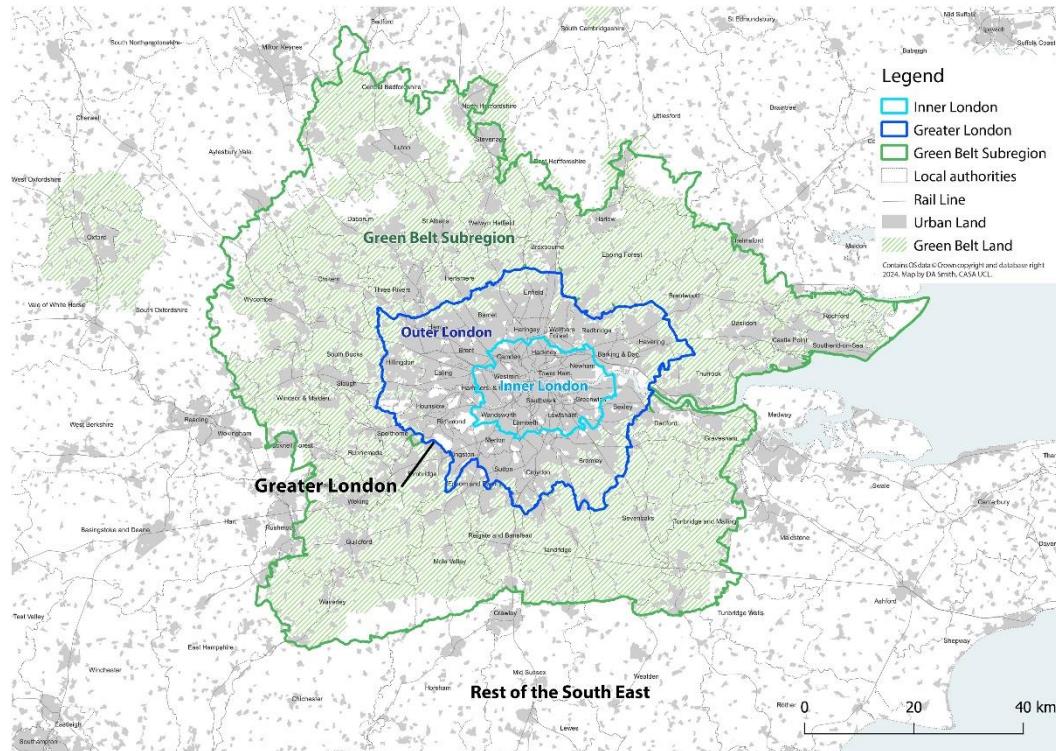
<sup>3</sup> MHCLG, [National Planning Policy Framework, Protecting Green Belt land \(Section 13\)](#), (2024)

<sup>4</sup> MHCLG, [National Planning Policy Framework, Protecting Green Belt land \(Section 13\)](#), (2024)

<sup>5</sup> DCLG, [Local Development Documents policy factsheet.pdf](#) (2017)

<sup>6</sup> House of Commons Library, [Green Belt](#), (2023)

**Figure 1: Map of the Green Belt subregion in London and the South East<sup>7</sup>**



## 1.1 History of the Green Belt

The roots of the Green Belt can be traced back to the concept of Garden Cities, an idea developed by urban planner Ebenezer Howard in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>89</sup> The concept was promoted in two of his works, *Tomorrow: A Peaceful Path to Social Reform* (1898), and *Garden Cities of Tomorrow* (1902). Howard intended to create cities with better housing, more access to green space and a revitalised relationship between town and country.

The core principles of the Garden City as set out by the Town and County Planning Association are:

- strong community engagement
- community ownership of land
- mixed-tenure homes and housing types that are genuinely affordable
- a wide range of local jobs within easy commuting distance of homes

<sup>7</sup> Duncan A. Smith, [Travel Sustainability of new build housing in the London region: Can London's Green Belt be developed sustainably?](#), *Cities* 156, (2025)

<sup>8</sup> London First, [The Green Belt: A Place for Londoners?](#) (2018)

<sup>9</sup> London has an even longer history of urban containment policies. Between 1580 and 1605, Queen Elizabeth I outlawed construction within 3 miles of any of London's gates. Efforts to contain London's outward growth came to an end in 1666 with the Great Fire of London. Paul Cheshire, [Pushing water uphill: containment policies doomed to fail](#), *Town Planning Review* 96 (4) (2024)

- well-designed homes with gardens combining the best of town and country
- green infrastructure that enhances the natural environment
- strong cultural, recreational and shopping facilities
- integrated and accessible transport.<sup>10</sup>

Examples of Garden Cities include Letchworth, founded in 1903, and Welwyn Garden City, founded in 1920.

The Garden City concept served as inspiration for parts of The London Society's *Development Plan for London* (1919), one of the first London plans.<sup>11</sup> The plan advocated for preserving, and where possible, connecting green area around London. This involved proposals to link existing green areas, such as Richmond Park and Epping Forest, with land that would be acquired by local authorities. However, without nationalised development rights empowering the state with the right to develop land, which was limited only to individuals on a case-by-case basis<sup>12</sup>, the authors felt the plan as it stood was undeliverable. Despite this, the Society remained optimistic that the vision could one day be realised, and once again, advocated for the concept in their next book, *London of the Future* (1921). Raymond Unwin, one of the book's authors and one of the designers of Letchworth, stated that the Green Belt was necessary to stop London from growing outwards, and to protect inhabitants from disease through access to fresh air.<sup>13</sup>

In 1929, the Greater London Regional Planning Committee, a formal body established in 1926 by then Minister of Health Neville Chamberlain, with Raymond Unwin as technical advisor, published its first report. This report identified an area up to six miles wide around London which would serve as a Green Belt. The Committee's second, and final report in 1933, further developed plans for a Green Belt.<sup>14</sup> The Committee's recommendations were ultimately frustrated by a lack of government money to pay for land.<sup>15</sup>

This problem was resolved in 1935 by the London County Council's (LCC) announcement of the Green Belt loan scheme. This scheme involved the LCC lending money to surrounding councils to purchase land for preservation.<sup>16</sup> In 1938, the Green Belt (London and Home Counties) Act became law, enabling local authorities to purchase land to protect green space. This prompted the rapid purchase of open land around London by the surrounding counties. By 1939 around 8,000 hectares of land had been bought, with a further 12,150 being bought immediately after the conclusion of World War Two.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Historic England, [A brief Introduction to Garden Cities](#) (2016)

<sup>11</sup> London Society, [Green sprawl Our current affection for a preservation myth?](#), (2014)

<sup>12</sup> Create Streets, [The long history of British Land Use Regulation](#) (2019)

<sup>13</sup> London Society, [Green sprawl Our current affection for a preservation myth?](#), (2014)

<sup>14</sup> London Society, [Green sprawl Our current affection for a preservation myth?](#), (2014)

<sup>15</sup> Marco Amati and Makoto Yokohari, [The Establishment of the London Greenbelt, Reaching Consensus over Purchasing Land](#), *Journal of Planning History* 6 (4), (2007)

<sup>16</sup> Marco Amati and Makoto Yokohari, [The Establishment of the London Greenbelt, Reaching Consensus over Purchasing Land](#), *Journal of Planning History* 6 (4), (2007)

<sup>17</sup> London First, [The Green Belt: A Place for Londoners?](#) (2018)

In 1941, Patrick Abercrombie, the founder of CPRE (formerly known as the Council for the Preservation of Rural England, then the Campaign to Protect Rural England), was appointed to prepare a London Plan by the London County Council. The plan, published in 1943 under the title *County of London Plan*, conceived of the Green Belt as an area exclusively for farming. In 1944, Abercrombie was appointed by London County Council to draft the *Greater London Plan*, the final version of which extended the purpose of the Green Belt to recreation.<sup>18</sup>

Developments during this period, such as the establishment of the Ministry of Town and Country Planning (1943), the New Towns Act (1946) and the Town and Country Planning Act (1947), provided further impetus for the growth of the Green Belt throughout the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>19</sup> However, it wasn't until The Green Belt Circular (1955), a paper distributed by the Ministry of Housing and Local Government that the Green Belt began to grow rapidly. The Circular encouraged planning authorities to create Green Belt areas which would be several miles wide, in order to:

- a) check the further growth of large built-up areas
- b) prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another
- c) preserve the special character of a town.<sup>20</sup>

The Circular established a Green Belt policy and extended it to areas other than London. With support from central government, Green Belts spread across England during the 1950s and 60s. The metropolitan Green Belt, also known as London's Green Belt, expanded until it reached an area over three times that of the current Greater London Authority boundary.<sup>21, 22</sup>

Green Belts were further extended across England through Country Structure Plans in the 1970s and then confirmed in Regional Spatial Strategies in the 2000s.<sup>23</sup>

Since the establishment of the GLA in 2000, the Mayor has produced statutory spatial development strategies known as the London Plan. Each of the Plans produced by subsequent London Mayors included policies protecting the Green Belt:

- The first London Plan, published in [2004](#) under Ken Livingston, included Policy 3D.8 which committed the Mayor and boroughs to protecting London's Green Belt.<sup>24</sup>
- The [2011 London Plan](#), published under Boris Johnson, included policy 7.16 stating that the Mayor supports the "current extent of London's Green Belt", as

<sup>18</sup> London Society, [Green sprawl Our current affection for a preservation myth?](#) (2014)

<sup>19</sup> London Society, [Green sprawl Our current affection for a preservation myth?](#) (2014)

<sup>20</sup> Ministry of Housing and Local Government, [Green Belts Circular](#) (1955)

<sup>21</sup> London First, [The Green Belt: A Place for Londoners?](#) (2018)

<sup>22</sup> Note: This calculation is based on the total area of London's Green Belt at 514,030 hectares from CPRE, [LONDON's 'PROTECTED' LAND: the extent, location and character of designated Green Belt and Metropolitan Open Land in Greater London](#) (2018) and the total area of London from ONS, [Size of the geographical area - Land only measurements in hectares in London](#) (2024).

<sup>23</sup> RTPI, [Green Belt Briefing](#) (?)

<sup>24</sup> Mayor of London, [London Plan 2004](#) (2004)

well as its extension in appropriate circumstances and its protection from inappropriate development.<sup>25</sup>

- The most recent [London Plan](#), published in 2021 under the current Mayor Sadiq Khan, includes Policy G2 which states that London's Green Belt should be "protected from inappropriate development".<sup>26</sup> More on the current London Plan and the future of the London Plan can be found in [section 2](#).

N.b. The London Assembly's Research Unit produced a paper in 2024, entitled '[London's spatial development strategy: a guide to the London Plan](#)'<sup>27</sup>, which provides further information on this subject, including an overview of the current plan and the processes used to develop it.

## 2 How current policy addresses London's Green Belt

A significant amount of land in London's outer boroughs is designated as Green Belt (see figure 2). This land is protected through local and national policies, including the London Plan and the NPPF. The London Environment and Housing Strategies also set objectives for the Green Belt.

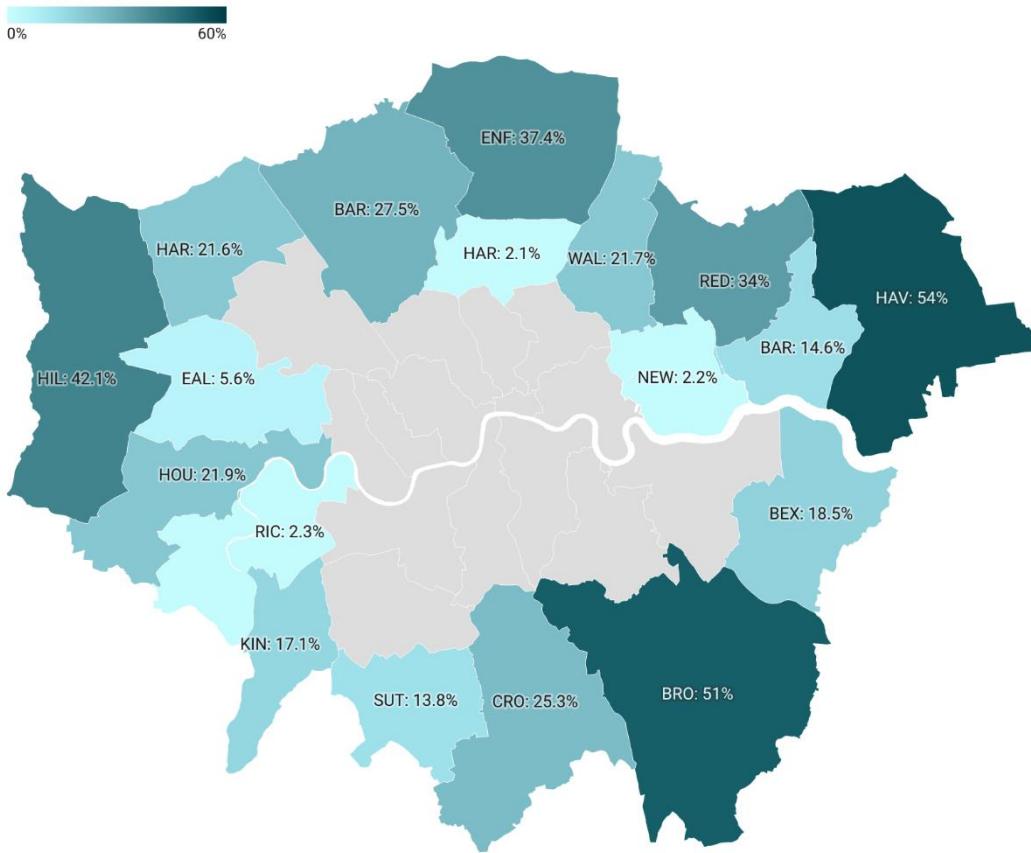
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<sup>25</sup> Mayor of London, [London Plan 2011](#) (2011)

<sup>26</sup> Mayor of London, [The London Plan](#) (2021)

<sup>27</sup> London Assembly Research Unit, [London's spatial development strategy: a guide to the London Plan](#), (2024)

**Figure 2: Percentage of land designated as Green Belt by borough<sup>28</sup>**



*Map created by the London Assembly Research Unit*

## 2.1 Mayoral Strategies

Under the GLA Act 1999, Section 41(1), the Mayor is required to publish seven statutory strategies. Further information on the background and detail of these strategies is available in a paper published by the London Assembly's Research Unit in 2024, entitled '[Mayoral strategies in London](#)'. Three of the Mayor's statutory strategies that are of particular relevance to the topic of the Green Belt are the [London Environment Strategy](#) (2018), the [London Housing Strategy](#) (2018) and the [London Plan](#) (2021).<sup>29</sup> The most directly relevant sections are summarised below:

### London Environment Strategy (2018)

Objective 5.1 of the Mayor's Environment Strategy commits the Mayor to making "more than half of London's area green by 2050". In support of this objective, Policy

<sup>28</sup> MHCLG, [Local authority Green Belt statistics for England: 2023 to 2024 \(2024\)](#)

<sup>29</sup> London Assembly Research Unit, [Mayoral strategies in London](#), (2024)

5.1.1 of the Strategy states that the Mayor will “protect, enhance and increase green areas in the city to provide green infrastructure services and benefits that London needs now and in the future”. Proposal 5.1.1.a mentions the London Plan’s protections of the Green Belt as a means of achieving this goal.<sup>30</sup>

## London Housing Strategy (2018)

Policy 3.1 aims to increase the supply of land for new homes by identifying opportunities for increased densities and creating mixed used sites, as well as removing barriers to housing delivery. Proposal A ii in support of this policy mentions that the Mayor will work with councils, Government and others to protect the Green Belt and support a shift to higher density development in existing built-up areas.<sup>31</sup>

## London Plan (2021)

The London Plan is the Mayor’s spatial development strategy, setting out an economic, environmental, transport and social framework for development. The most recent London Plan was published in 2021.

The current Plan’s guidance on protecting London’s Green Belt is contained within Policy G2 London’s Green Belt. This policy states that the Green Belt should be protected from inappropriate development by refusing proposals that would harm the Green Belt, except in “very special circumstances”. There is not a specific policy definition for these circumstances, instead it is a matter of planning judgement. Additionally, enhancement of the Green Belt should be supported to provide beneficial uses to Londoners.<sup>32</sup> These benefits include enhanced access to green space and improving the quality of areas. Policy G2 B also emphasises that a judgement of “exceptional circumstances” is required to justify the extension of Green Belt land or for land to be de-designated as Green Belt.

The London Plan includes Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), which are metrics of success against which the Plan’s policies can be measured. Protection of the Green Belt is included as one of the Plan’s two KPIs related to its environmental policies. The measure for this KPI is “harm to the Green Belt and Metropolitan Open Land<sup>33</sup> prevented through the referred application process”.<sup>34</sup>

The Green Belt is mentioned in relation to several different policies in the London Plan. This includes Policy GG2 Making the best use of land, which states that to create sustainable mixed-use places, those involved in planning and development must “protect and enhance London’s open spaces, including the Green Belt”.<sup>35</sup> The

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<sup>30</sup> Mayor of London, [London Environment Strategy](#) (2018)

<sup>31</sup> Mayor of London, [London Housing Strategy](#) (2018)

<sup>32</sup> Mayor of London, [The London Plan](#) (2021)

<sup>33</sup> Metropolitan Open Land is “extensive areas of land bounded by urban development around London that fulfils a similar function to Green Belt and is protected from inappropriate development by land-use planning policies.” It is afforded the same level of protection as Green Belt land, as laid out in Policy G3 Metropolitan Open Land.

<sup>34</sup> Mayor of London, [The London Plan](#) (2021)

<sup>35</sup> Mayor of London, [The London Plan](#) (2021)

Green Belt is also referenced as one of the considerations for selecting sites for sports facilities in Policy S5 Sports and recreation facilities.

## 2.2 National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was updated in December 2024 as part of the Government's planning reforms. The NPPF is the guiding document for local planning authorities and developers on what they can and cannot do when planning developments. The NPPF is a non-statutory document, which means that local planning authorities are not legally bound by the NPPF, however they are expected to demonstrate that development plans and the processes they follow are consistent with national policy as set out in the document.<sup>36</sup>

Chapter 13 of the revised NPPF covers the protection of Green Belt land in England. This chapter sets out the five purposes of the Green Belt, already set out in the introduction of this paper, and conditions for establishing new areas or altering boundaries. This states that Green Belt boundaries should only be altered where "exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified through the preparation or updating of plans". Exceptional circumstances, according to the Framework, include an inability to meet an authority's need for homes, commercial or other development through other means.<sup>37</sup>

The NPPF also includes guidance on proposals that affect the Green Belt. The Framework deems development in the Green Belt inappropriate unless one of several exceptions applies. These exceptions include:

- 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), including buildings, 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)
- g) limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land (including a material change of use to residential or mixed use including residential), whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding

<sup>36</sup> CPRE, [What is the National Planning Policy Framework?](#), (2024)

<sup>37</sup> Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (2024)

temporary buildings), which would not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt.

h) Other forms of development provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. These are:

- i. mineral extraction
- ii. engineering operations
- iii. local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location
- iv. the re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction
- v. material changes in the use of land (such as changes of use for outdoor sport or recreation, or for cemeteries and burial grounds)
- vi. development, including buildings, brought forward under a Community Right to Build Order or Neighbourhood Development Order.

In addition to the list above, since December 2024, the development of homes, commercial and other forms of developments may also be considered appropriate within the Green Belt where they meet certain tests (discussed below).

Further proposed changes to the NPPF were announced in December 2025, with the consultation on these closing on 10 March 2026.<sup>38</sup>

## The grey belt

The revised NPPF also includes policy on building homes on the Green Belt, something which was not present in the previous version. The revised NPPF allows, in certain circumstances, development on land which is covered by a newly created grey belt classification.

The grey belt is defined in the NPPF as “land in the Green Belt comprising previously developed land and/or any other land that, in either case, does not strongly contribute to any of the following purposes:

- to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas,
- to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another,
- to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns.”<sup>39</sup>

Grey belt excludes land which is covered by other protections, such as sites of special scientific interest, national parks, or local green space.<sup>40</sup>

Examples of grey belt land could include car parks, old petrol stations and land on the edge of existing settlements.<sup>41</sup> National Policy requires local authorities to

<sup>38</sup> MHCLG, [National Planning Policy Framework: proposed reforms and other changes to the planning system](#), page accessed 28 January 2026

<sup>39</sup> MHCLG, [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (2024)

<sup>40</sup> MHCLG, [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (2024)

<sup>41</sup> BBC, [What is the 'grey belt' and how many homes could Labour build on it?](#) (2024)

identify, where necessary, land which is grey belt land for the purposes of considering applications on Green Belt land.<sup>42</sup>

The revised NPPF states that the development of homes, commercial and other development in the Green Belt is appropriate when:

- the development would utilise grey belt land and not undermine the purposes of the remaining Green Belt area (defined in the introduction)
- there is demonstrable unmet need for the type of development
- when the development would be in a sustainable location
- where the development meets the 'Golden Rules' requirements.

The environmental campaign group CPRE argue that the definition of what constitutes grey belt land is too subjective and, as such, could lead to the degradation of the Green Belt.<sup>43</sup> CPRE believe that the position taken in the revised NPPF of dismissing areas of the Green Belt as being neither "green, productive nor accessible" misses the belt's inherent natural capital, qualities which directly or indirectly produce value or benefits to people. It argues that instead of building on these areas, an effort should be made to improve and enhance the Green Belt.<sup>44</sup> More on proposals to improve the Green Belt can be found below in [section 3](#) and [section 4](#).

## The Golden Rules

The 'Golden Rules', added to the NPPF in the 2024 revisions, covers considerations that should be made when planning to build housing on Green Belt land. These considerations are:

- a) affordable housing which reflects development plan policies for affordable housing as set out in the NPPF
- b) necessary improvements to local or national infrastructure
- c) the provision of new, or improvements to existing, green spaces that are accessible to the public. New residents should be able to access good quality green spaces within a short walk of their home, whether through onsite provision or through access to offsite spaces.

The NPPF states that developments which comply with the 'Golden Rules' are to be given significant weight in favour of being granted permission.

<sup>42</sup> MHCLG, [Green Belt Guidant](#), page accessed 2 February 2026

<sup>43</sup> CPRE, [All you need to know about the Green Belt](#), accessed 4 June 2025. Emerging case law in this area may clarify how the policy should be interpreted.

<sup>44</sup> CPRE, [Bettering the Green Belt](#), (2023)

## 2.3 Towards a new London Plan (2025)

On 9 May 2025, the Mayor of London launched a consultation on the next London Plan. The next London Plan will replace the current plan, published in 2021, and will set the Mayor's policies around development and land use in London over the next 20 to 25 years.

Supporting this consultation was a document setting out a path towards the next Plan, entitled 'Towards a new London Plan'.<sup>45</sup> Core to this document is the need for 880,000 net additional homes in London over the next ten years or 88,000 homes annually. This target for London has been identified through the NPPF's new Standard Method, the government's formula for calculating the number of new homes required for each region based on analysis of housing need.<sup>46</sup> The drive to address the housing crisis is the core theme of the consultation document. The Mayor's foreword states that meeting this new housing target will require a building rate higher than anything seen since the 1930s. In the consultation document, the Mayor referred to this as 'an extraordinary challenge' and one "we must do everything we can to meet", including "making better use of the land we have".<sup>47</sup> This has led to a review of current policy to find different ways of releasing land to meet the new housing target over the next decade.

To respond to these challenges, the government has included a new stipulation in the updated NPPF to enable development in areas of designated Green Belt land in exceptional circumstances. Such exceptional circumstances "in this context include, but are not limited to, when an authority cannot meet its identified need for homes, commercial or other development through other means".<sup>48</sup> The NPPF states that in such instances, the authority should review Green Belt land in accordance with NPPF policies and propose boundary alterations to meet their development needs in full, unless the review provides "clear evidence" that doing so would "fundamentally undermine" the purposes of the remaining Green Belt.<sup>49</sup>

The Mayor states in Towards a New London Plan that to meet the new national requirements, London will be required to "review and release Green Belt to meet housing and other development needs where those needs cannot be met in other ways, such as redevelopment within London's existing built area".<sup>50</sup> The Mayor has commissioned a London-wide Green Belt assessment to explore possible options for unlocking enough land to meet housing need across the capital.<sup>51</sup> A key objective of the assessment is to inform the next London Plan, of which the GLA is intending to publish a draft version in Summer 2026 for public consultation. The Green Belt assessment would contribute towards the Strategic Housing Land Availability

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<sup>45</sup> Mayor of London, [Towards a new London Plan](#) (2025)

<sup>46</sup> Mayor of London, [Towards a new London Plan](#) (2025)

<sup>47</sup> Mayor of London, [Towards a new London Plan](#) (2025)

<sup>48</sup> MHCLG, [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (2024)

<sup>49</sup> MHCLG, [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (2024)

<sup>50</sup> Mayor of London, [Towards a new London Plan](#) (2025)

<sup>51</sup> Mayor of London, [Mayor: We must build on the Green Belt to help fix London's housing crisis](#) (2025)

Assessment (SHLAA)<sup>52</sup>, a necessary component of the London Plan evidence base, helping to demonstrate how London's housing needs will be met.<sup>53</sup>

The GLA states that development will follow a "brownfield first" approach, where opportunities to deliver homes within existing urban areas will be prioritised.<sup>54</sup> These sites will be "optimised" to make the biggest contribution possible towards the annual 88,000 homes target.

The Mayor launched a 'LAND4LDN' scheme in Autumn 2024 to assess the housing capacity of sites in London. Under the scheme, sites can be submitted by local authorities, developers, landowners and the public to the GLA to inform its SHLAA. As of Autumn 2024, over 750 sites had been submitted to the scheme.<sup>55</sup> Once submitted, sites are then assessed by the GLA to estimate how many homes they may deliver.<sup>56</sup> Any shortfall in delivery is intended to be resolved through development on the Green Belt, provided it meets the requirements set out in the NPPF.

## 2.4 National Green Belt Review Fund

A national grant fund, the National Green Belt Review Fund, was established by the Government in December 2024 to address the additional resourcing requirements on planning authorities to respond to the NPPF changes.<sup>57</sup> In January 2025, the GLA submitted an expression of interest in partnership with 12 of the 18 London boroughs with designated Green Belt land for an award of up to £840,000 from MHCLG to support and implement a London-wide Green Belt assessment. Individual expressions of interest were submitted by six London boroughs.<sup>58</sup> On 27 February 2025, MHCLG published details of the 133 local authorities that were awarded a share of the £9.31 million fund. The GLA and London borough partnership was awarded £770,000. Separate funding of £70,000 was allocated to each of Bexley, Bromley, Enfield, Havering and Hillingdon.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> A Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) is a technical exercise to determine the quantity and suitability of land potentially available for housing development.

<sup>53</sup> Mayor of London, [MD3340 London Green Belt review funding](#) (2025)

<sup>54</sup> Mayor of London, [Towards a new London Plan](#) (2025)

<sup>55</sup> Mayor of London, [Towards a new London Plan](#) (2025)

<sup>56</sup> Mayor of London, [Towards a new London Plan](#) (2025)

<sup>57</sup> Mayor of London, [MD3340 London Green Belt review funding](#) (2025)

<sup>58</sup> Mayor of London, [MD3340 London Green Belt review funding](#) (2025)

<sup>59</sup> MHCLG, [Funding to support local authorities with the costs of Green Belt reviews: Successful local authorities](#), 27 February 2025.

## 3 Views on the Green Belt

There are a number of ongoing debates about current policy toward the Green Belt. Commentators have different perspectives on the priorities, benefits, drawbacks and uses for the Green Belt. This section summarises some of the main arguments as they relate to five policy areas:

- Urban sprawl
- Health and wellbeing
- Food and farming
- Climate change and wildlife
- Housing supply and prices

### 3.1 Urban sprawl

One of the core purposes of the Green Belt in the NPPF is “to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas”.<sup>60</sup> Urban sprawl is defined as the “expansion of towns or cities into rural or previously undeveloped land”.<sup>61</sup> According to the University of the Built Environment, this development is often characterised by low-density housing developments that stretch away from the urban centre.<sup>62</sup> Criticisms of this form of development often include that it results in environmental damage and pollution, social issues, such as social homogeneity,<sup>63</sup> and increased public expenditure on infrastructure.<sup>64</sup>

Some academics and organisations argue that the Green Belt has been successful in preventing ‘urban sprawl’ in England. In their assessment of Green Belts’ wider functions, Matthew Kirby and Alister Scott, researchers at Northumbria University, highlight a 2022 study which argues that Green Belts have prevented urban sprawl.<sup>65</sup> CPRE argues that it is important to maintain the Green Belt to avoid turning London into a “high-carbon, car-dependent, unhealthy city”.<sup>66</sup> It advocates for creating

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<sup>60</sup> MHCLG, [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (2024)

<sup>61</sup> University of the Built Environment, [How can we deal with urban sprawl?](#) (2025)

<sup>62</sup>)

<sup>63</sup> The coalescence of people from the same income/social group, ethnicity or age. University of the Built Environment, [How can we deal with urban sprawl?](#) (2025)

<sup>64</sup> University of the Built Environment, [How can we deal with urban sprawl?](#) (2025)

<sup>65</sup> Matthew Kirby and Alister Scott, [Multifunctional Green Belts: A planning policy assessment of Green Belts wider functions in England](#), *Land Use Policy* 132 (2023)

<sup>66</sup> CPRE, [Why London needs to be a ‘compact city’](#) (2022)

compact cities<sup>67</sup> instead, where people can get around on public transport or by walking and cycling.<sup>68</sup>

The Centre for Cities acknowledges the role that the Green Belt has played in preventing urban sprawl, but state that this is not cost free. It argues that the loss of developable land has contributed to fewer homes being built and higher house prices.<sup>69</sup> Centre for Cities have also pointed to cases, such as Cambridge, where development has 'jumped' the Green Belt, with new settlements being developed on greenfield land.<sup>70</sup> This, they argue, encourages more car dependency.<sup>71</sup>

In a 2014 paper, Professor Vanessa Miriam Carlow, Head of Institute for Sustainable Urbanism at TU Braunschweig, argued that there is ambiguity in the literature about whether the Green Belt has prevented the spread of London, or only the spread of London's housing. Professor Carlow states that housing is only one function in a city, and the exclusion of housing from the Green Belt has created the need for certain forms of development that would otherwise not exist. Professor Carlow uses the example of airports, arguing that the open space around London has facilitated the location and extension of airports around the city. According to Professor Carlow, this opens the question of whether the Green Belt supports sustainable development or simply fosters other types of development.<sup>72</sup>

### 3.2 Health and wellbeing

According to the CPRE, the Green Belt provides access to green space to 30 million people across England.<sup>73</sup> Access to green space has been linked to improved mental, social and physical wellbeing. Figure 3 shows that in 2023-24, 40 per cent of people who visited green space did so for mental health and wellbeing purposes. Natural England's People and Nature Survey shows that since COVID-19, 38 per cent of respondents felt that nature was more important to them than ever, and that 41 per cent felt that visiting local green and natural spaces was even more important to their wellbeing.<sup>74</sup>

Despite broad agreement on the benefits of green space to mental and physical health, some commentators state that the Green Belt does not effectively fulfil this function. A 2018 report from London First (now BusinessLDN) states that approximately 22 per cent of London's Green Belt is publicly accessible land.<sup>75</sup> Tom

<sup>67</sup> A compact city is defined more by the objectives it sets to achieve rather than a single outcome. A compact city is one that is "distinctively urban in very general terms of density, but also in more specific terms such as contiguous building structure, interconnected streets, mixed land uses, and the way people travel within the city." Advocates of compact cities argue that they support more sustainable ways of living and increased productivity. Gabriel Ahlfeldt and Elisabetta Pietrostefani, [The Compact City in Empirical Research: A quantitative Literature Review](#) (2017)

<sup>68</sup> CPRE, [Why London needs to be a 'compact city'](#) (2022)

<sup>69</sup> Centre for Cities, [Benefits and challenges of the Green Belt](#), accessed 22 September 2025

<sup>70</sup> Green field land is land that has not been built on before.

<sup>71</sup> Centre for Cities, [Why building on the Green Belt is good for the environment](#) (2025)

<sup>72</sup> Vanessa Miriam Carlow, [From greenbelt to infrabelt – London's Green Belt as a model for sustainable landscape?](#), (2014)

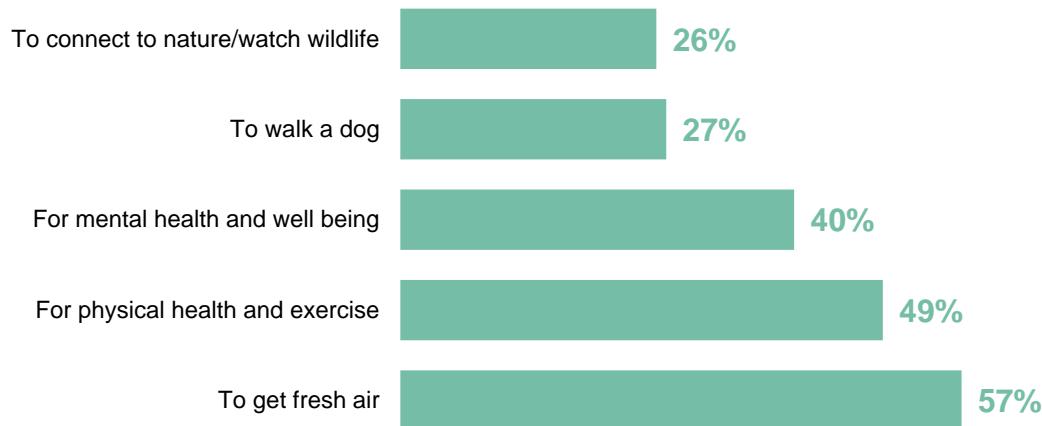
<sup>73</sup> CPRE, [State of the Green Belt 2018](#) (2018)

<sup>74</sup> CPRE, [All you need to know about the Green Belt](#), accessed 4 June 2025

<sup>75</sup> London First, [The Green Belt: A Place for Londoners?](#) (2018)

Papworth, writing for the Adam Smith Institute, claims that London's Green Belt is not accessible to enough people, especially in the centre of London, to provide them with meaningful benefits.<sup>76</sup>

**Figure 3: Main reasons for visiting a green and natural space between April 2023 - March 2024<sup>77</sup>**



*Chart created by the London Assembly Research Unit*

### 3.3 Food and farming

Agricultural land accounts for 65 per cent of the land that is designated as Green Belt across England. Roughly 39 per cent of London's Green Belt is registered as agricultural land.<sup>78</sup> Some commentators argue that the amount of Green Belt land which is designated for agricultural purposes conflicts with the other benefits of the Green Belt. A post by the Adam Smith Institute argues that private agricultural land is neither publicly accessible nor is it friendly to wildlife.<sup>79</sup>

CPRE argue that agricultural land designated as Green Belt has the potential to provide local produce to many urban centres, improving food security and self-sufficiency, as well as reducing food miles.<sup>80</sup>

Analysis by CPRE in 2025 showed that in 2021 "urban fringe" farms across the UK produced enough to provide over 61 per cent of all food needs for 7.2 million people. The same farms supplied 20 per cent or more of the UK's key cereals and 10 per cent or more of other major food supplies.<sup>81</sup>

<sup>76</sup> Adam Smith Institute, [The Green Noose: An analysis of Green Belts and proposals for reform](#) (2015)

<sup>77</sup> Natural England, [Adults' Year 4 Annual Report \(April 2023-March 2024\)](#) (2024)

<sup>78</sup> Department for Levelling up, Housing and Communities, [Land use statistics: England 2022 – live tables by LSOA and MSOA](#) (2022)

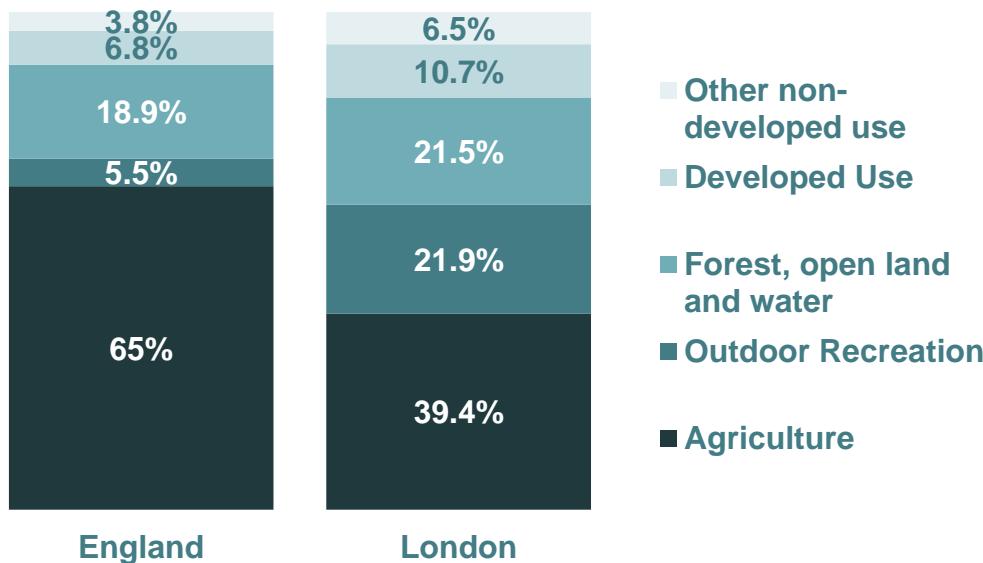
<sup>79</sup> Adam Smith Institute, [Re-examining London's misnamed Green Belt](#), page accessed 13 January 2026

<sup>80</sup> CPRE, [All you need to know about the Green Belt](#), accessed 4 June 2025. Food miles refer to the distance between the place where food is grown and the place where it is eaten.

<sup>81</sup> CPRE, [Farming on the edge: new insights into farming in the urban edge](#), (2025)

28 per cent of all the usable farmland in the Green Belt is covered by agri-environment schemes that aim to improve the value of farmland for nature and for public access. CPRE advocates for doubling this coverage.<sup>82 83</sup>

**Figure 4: Breakdown of land use within areas designated as Green Belt in England and London (2022)<sup>84</sup>**



*Chart created by the London Assembly Research Unit*

Writing for CPRE in 2024, Mark Walton, Director of Shared Assets, advocated for using the Green Belt to encourage the development of more community-led farms. Mr Walton argued that community-led “peri-urban” farms, such as [Organiclea](#), have a key role to play in balancing urban and rural land use.<sup>85</sup> Being close to urban centres, these farms provide an opportunity for people to gain experience growing food and act as a critical link to the development of younger farmers. Mr Walton also argues that they contribute to more “just and resilient local food systems and local economies”.<sup>86</sup>

To encourage more community-led farms, Mr Walton argues for adding ‘protecting agricultural land’ as a sixth purpose of the Green Belt and including planning policy

<sup>82</sup> CPRE, [All you need to know about the Green Belt](#), accessed 4 June 2025

<sup>83</sup> CPRE, [State of the Green Belt 2023, A Vision for the 21<sup>st</sup> century](#), (2023)

<sup>84</sup> Department for Levelling up, Housing and Communities, [Land use statistics: England 2022 – live tables by LSOA and MSOA](#) (2022)

<sup>85</sup> [Merriam-Webster](#) define “peri-urban” as “of or relating to an area immediately surrounding a city or town”.

<sup>86</sup> CPRE, [Perspectives on the Urban Edge](#) (2024)

to enable the growth and expansion of “agroecological enterprises” where they contribute to sustainable development goals.<sup>87</sup>

In 2018, the London Assembly Environment Committee undertook an investigation on farming in London's Green Belt. The [report](#) identified over 200 farms in Greater London, covering between them about 11,000 hectares—about a third of Greater London's Green Belt area.<sup>88</sup> As a result of its investigation, the Environment Committee recommended to the Mayor that in the next London Plan, the Green Belt and food growing policies should include a requirement for boroughs to give added weight in local development plans to food growing as one of the most productive activities in the Green Belt.

This was further examined through an Assembly Environment Committee investigation in 2025 into food growing in the capital, culminating in a report, [London: A growing city?](#), published in April 2025.<sup>89</sup> Recognising the significant value to Londoners, the Committee recommended that the Mayor should work with boroughs to undertake a London-wide review of food growing sites across the capital and identify opportunities for making new land available for Londoners to grow food, including new allotments, community farms and orchards.

### 3.4 Climate change

CPRE argues that the Green Belt plays a significant role in protecting the climate and enhancing England's climate resilience. For example, it states that the Green Belt's 140,000 hectares of deciduous woodland and 130,000 hectares of floodplain play a key role in absorbing heavy rainfall and protecting against flooding.<sup>90</sup> It calls for further investment in creating ponds and wetlands, restoring floodplains, and planting more trees and hedgerows in the Green Belt, which it argues would help soak up more water, protect nearby towns against flooding, and help prevent wildfires on dry grassland.<sup>91</sup>

The Green Belt may also serve to mitigate or lessen the urban heat island effect.<sup>92</sup> The urban heat island effect refers to localised warming within cities caused by roads and buildings, which retain heat.<sup>93</sup> Responding to the consultation on Towards a new London Plan (2025) on behalf of the Grantham Research Institute at the LSE, Bob Ward states that building on the Green Belt is likely to increase the urban heat island effect. Additionally, new buildings on former Green Belt land are more likely to be exposed to the risk of wildfire as a result of their proximity to vegetation.<sup>94</sup>

In its [response](#) to the 'Towards a new London Plan' consultation in June 2025, the Environment Committee wrote to the Mayor with several recommendations on the

<sup>87</sup> CPRE, [Perspectives on the Urban Edge](#) (2024)

<sup>88</sup> London Assembly, [Farming in London's Green Belt](#) (2018)

<sup>89</sup> London Assembly, [London: A Growing City?](#) (2025)

<sup>90</sup> CPRE, [All you need to know about the Green Belt](#), (2023)

<sup>91</sup> CPRE, [Bettering the Green Belt](#), (2023)

<sup>92</sup> CPRE, [All you need to know about the Green Belt](#), accessed 4 June 2025

<sup>93</sup> Helen Beddoe, [How the urban heat island effect makes cities vulnerable to climate change](#) (2022)

<sup>94</sup> Grantham Research Institute on Climate change and the Environment, [Evidence submission and comments on the London Plan Consultation](#) (2025)

potential impacts of the release of Green Belt land. One recommendation asked that the Mayor ensure that the full range of green infrastructure benefits of green spaces - such as water management and urban cooling - are considered in any spatial planning decisions, and such sites are given protection.<sup>95</sup>

Other stakeholders are sceptical about the extent to which environmental benefits of the Green Belt are being realised in practice. Matthew Kirby and Alister Scott from Northumberland University argue that, unlike Green Belts in other countries, England's Green Belt policy does not have a formal purpose to improve the quality of the land it covers, with improvements encouraged in the NPPF as "secondary considerations". As a result of this, Dr Kirby and Dr Scott found that the environmental benefits of Green Belts are not fully realised in planning policy, and that Green Belts are treated differently by different planning authorities across the UK. Their analysis found that the contributions of Green Belts to benefits such as biodiversity and flood risk mitigations were often acknowledged in local plans, however plans were much less likely to actively encourage their provision in policies.<sup>96</sup>

In a 2015 paper for the Adam Smith Institute, Senior Fellow Tom Papworth argues that the current policy protections of Green Belts preserve "low quality farmland near towns at the expense of more environmentally valuable land both within, and further removed from, existing towns."<sup>97</sup>

Tom Papworth further argues that the restrictions to development on the Green Belt necessitates the construction of transport infrastructure to accommodate commuters travelling from farther away, which in turn has negative impacts on the Green Belt, generating more greenhouse emissions from longer commutes.<sup>98</sup> The author proposes either abolishing the Green Belt and protecting areas of environmental, historic or amenity value through other existing designations, or removing Green Belt designations from all intensive agricultural land.<sup>99</sup>

Professor Dieter Helm of Oxford University acknowledges that Green Belt access is "often poor and almost always sub-optimal", however he argues that the answer is a major programme of improving access to the Green Belt.<sup>100</sup> In 2024, he argued that "grey belt" sites are prime candidates to be made greener as they are often in the right place to maximise the value of natural capital to people and to provide access to clean air, recreation and immersion in nature.<sup>101</sup>

### 3.5 House supply and prices

London is in the midst of a housing crisis, and some researchers argue that Green Belt restrictions contribute to this. Other researchers argue that the relationship is

<sup>95</sup> GLA, [Letter from Assembly Environment Committee to Mayor on the London Plan Consultation](#), (2025)

<sup>96</sup> Matthew Kirby and Alister Scott, [Multifunctional Green Belts: A planning policy assessment of Green Belts wider functions in England](#), (2023)

<sup>97</sup> Adam Smith Institute, [The Green Noose: An analysis of Green Belts and proposals for reform](#) (2015)

<sup>98</sup> Adam Smith Institute, [The Green Noose: An analysis of Green Belts and proposals for reform](#) (2015)

<sup>99</sup> Adam Smith Institute, [The Green Noose: An analysis of Green Belts and proposals for reform](#) (2015)

<sup>100</sup> Dieter Helm, [In defence of the Green Belt](#), (2015)

<sup>101</sup> CPRE, [Perspectives on the Urban Edge](#), (2024)

less clear and that enabling more development on Green Belt land will not resolve the crisis. This section summarises some of the recent research and commentary in this field.

In 2016, Alan Mace, Fanny Blanc, Ian Gordon, and Kath Scanlon from the LSE argued in favour of Green Belt reform, particularly the green corridor model, on the grounds that it will help housing delivery through two mechanisms. These are:

- making more land available for development
- changing the thinking around land constraints in London and the behaviour of developers.

Constraining land means that the availability of new land to develop is “inelastic”, meaning that changes in price do not produce changes in supply. This leads to a reluctance from developers to develop sites “too rapidly” and risk using up all existing brownfield site capacity. According to the authors, only once land is made available will this fear go away, enabling more rapid development of brownfield sites.<sup>102</sup>

The authors explore a variety of approaches to Green Belt reform, and state that they see the greatest value in the “green wedges” or coordination of corridors approach.<sup>103</sup> This would involve opening up certain sections of the Green Belt for development, whilst enhancing the effectiveness of remaining sections of the belt to provide “green objectives”.<sup>104</sup>

Duncan Smith of UCL states that Green Belt land restrictions have been a salient factor in a lack of development in Outer London, resulting in low delivery of affordable housing. He notes that one strategy to increase development in the region could include locating more Opportunity Area sites in Outer London and requiring further public transport investment to release sites.<sup>105</sup>

The London development and housebuilding sector have welcomed the Mayor's Green Belt review to facilitate the delivery of new homes. In its September 2025 report, the Home Builders Federation recommended that the Mayor and GLA should proceed as quickly as possible with the Green Belt review in order to release land in the Green Belt and Metropolitan Open Land in the next London Plan.<sup>106</sup>

Scott Cabot, Head of Residential Research at CBRE Group, argues that the number of homes which could be delivered in London's Green Belt (see figure 5) means that there is a case for review.<sup>107</sup>

<sup>102</sup> Alan Mace, Fanny Blanc, Ian Gordon, Kath Scanlon, [A 21<sup>st</sup> Century Metropolitan Green Belt](#) (2016)

<sup>103</sup> Alan Mace, Fanny Blanc, Ian Gordon, Kath Scanlon, [A 21<sup>st</sup> Century Metropolitan Green Belt](#) (2016)

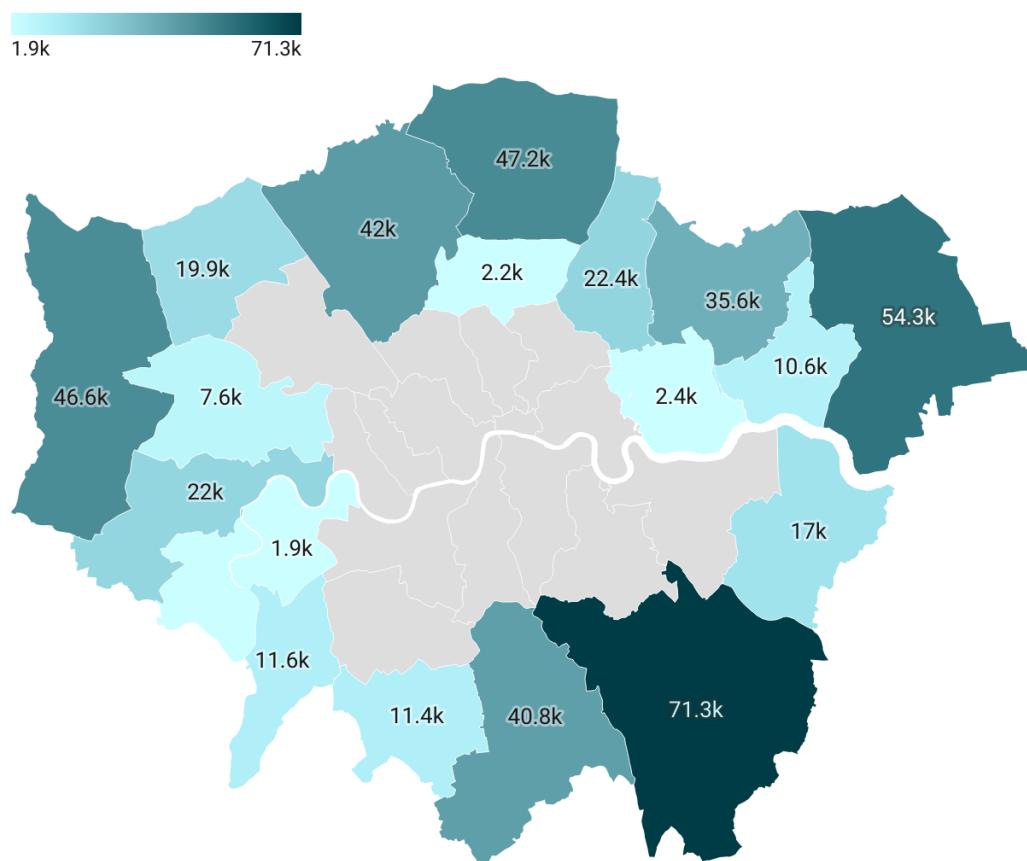
<sup>104</sup> Alan Mace, Fanny Blanc, Ian Gordon, Kath Scanlon, [A 21<sup>st</sup> Century Metropolitan Green Belt](#) (2016)

<sup>105</sup> Duncan A. Smith, [Travel Sustainability of new build housing in the London region: Can London's Green Belt be developed sustainably?](#) *Cities* 156 (2025)

<sup>106</sup> Home Builders Federation, [Mind the Gap: Examining London's housing shortfall](#) (2025)

<sup>107</sup> CBRE Group, [Is there a case for building on London's Green Belt?](#) (2024)

**Figure 5: Potential number of homes that could be delivered on London's Green Belt within the city border [according to CBRE]<sup>108</sup>**



Map data: © Crown copyright and database right 2018 • Created with Datawrapper

*Map created by the London Assembly Research Unit*

Professor Paul Cheshire of the LSE and Boyana Buyuklieva of UCL argued in 2019 that the limits on available urban land imposed by the Green Belt can be linked to land prices rising by a factor of 15 since the belt was created. According to them, this results in too much money being spent on land, and not enough on providing community or design value.<sup>109</sup>

Writing for the LSE, Policy Fellow Jenevieve Treadwell also states that the Green Belt “artificially inflates the cost of land and limits the number of homes that can be built.”<sup>110</sup> Professor Cheshire argues that the Green Belt has not managed to create a compact city. Instead, he argues the Green Belt has caused growth to “leapfrog” the boundary as commuters search for more affordable places to live. This, he argues,

<sup>108</sup> CBRE, [Is there a case for building on London's Green Belt?](#) (2024)

<sup>109</sup> Paul Cheshire and Boyana Buyuklieva, [Homes on the right tracks](#) (2019)

<sup>110</sup> The LSE, [Forget the Green Belt, London needs more houses](#) (2024)

has produced low density, car-dependent living.<sup>111</sup> Dr Smith supports the argument that the Green Belt does not perform well in terms of travel sustainability. His analysis found that authorities in the Green Belt region are largely car dependent. He argues that this may be the result of Green Belt restrictions preventing towns from growing and reaching the scale needed for public transport.<sup>112</sup>

Professor Cheshire proposes that releasing land within walking distance of commuter stations in the Greater London Region would yield enough land to build around one million homes, through the development of 1.8 per cent of the existing Green Belt land. This estimate would retain 10 per cent of the land released for publicly accessible green space. Professor Cheshire argues that his proposal would avoid building on land marked for amenity use (areas of outstanding natural beauty, national parks) or environmental quality. He also states that this "transit-oriented" form of development would be "environmentally benign" as it would maximise the use of trains.<sup>113</sup>

Some organisations, such as CPRE, argue that releasing Green Belt land will not resolve the housing crisis facing the UK because it will not necessarily lead to an increase in affordable social housing. In 2023, before changes to the NPPF were introduced, CPRE stated that of 13 recently approved developments on the Green Belt, only five per cent of the resulting stock was social housing.<sup>114</sup>

Similarly, an article from the Royal Geographical Society argued that house prices may stay high, even if a significant number of new homes are built, if demand continues to grow faster than supply. Additionally, the Royal Geographical Society stated that the cost of building homes is in large part driven by increased costs in material and labour, which industry reports suggest have risen by 15-20 per cent since 2020.<sup>115</sup> These costs make the delivery of affordable housing difficult and are unlikely to be impacted by increasing the supply of land, such as through the release of Green Belt land.

Writing in 2024, Professor Dieter Helm argued that building on the Green Belt will not necessarily increase affordable housing delivery as new homes on the Green Belt are unlikely to be cheap, and that housebuilders do not "want to maximise the number of houses they build, especially if doing so pushes down prices."<sup>116</sup> He argues that for housebuilders, building low-price affordable housing in urban areas is not as profitable as building executive houses on naturally valuable plots of Green Belt land.<sup>117</sup> Instead of building on the Green Belt, Professor Helm proposes that the government should plan for new towns and redevelop existing urban areas.

Analysis by CPRE in 2021 of the average density of new residential addresses within and outside the Green Belt, between 2013 and 2018, found that development inside

<sup>111</sup> Paul Cheshire, [Pushing water uphill: containment policies doomed to fail](#), *Town Planning Review* 96 (4) (2024)

<sup>112</sup> Duncan A. Smith, [Travel Sustainability of new build housing in the London region: Can London's Green Belt be developed sustainably?](#) *Cities* 156 (2025)

<sup>113</sup> Paul Cheshire, [Pushing water uphill: containment policies doomed to fail](#), *Town Planning Review* 96 (4) (2024)

<sup>114</sup> CPRE, [Bettering the Green Belt](#), (2023)

<sup>115</sup> Royal Geographical Society, [Building on London's Green Belt](#) (2025)

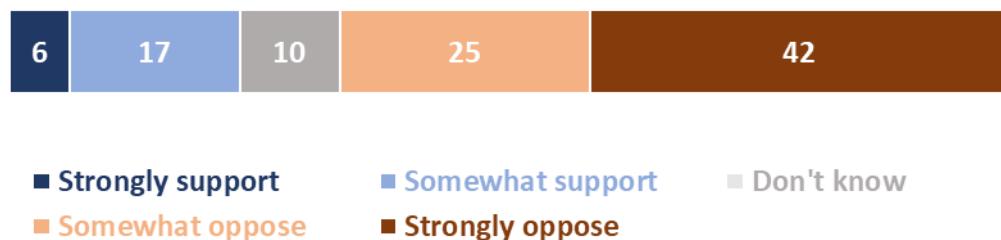
<sup>116</sup> CPRE, [Perspectives on the Urban Edge](#), (2024)

<sup>117</sup> CPRE, [Perspectives on the Urban Edge](#), (2024)

the Green Belt was relatively low density. In 2017-2018, the average density was 14 dwellings per hectare (dph) on Green Belt land, compared to 31 dph outside the Green Belt.<sup>118</sup> London Green Belt Council pointed out in 2022 that these densities are below the 100 dph minimum needed for the provision of a local bus service, resulting in more car-dependent developments.<sup>119</sup>

Public support for building on the Green Belt is far from universal. Polling carried out by YouGov in 2024 found that 23 per cent of respondents supported allowing new housing to be built on the Green Belt, whilst 67 per cent opposed this.<sup>120</sup>

**Figure 6: Public support for allowing new housing to be built on Green Belt land (2024)<sup>121</sup>**



*Chart created by the London Assembly Research Unit*

## 4 What's next for the Green Belt?

As discussed above, changes to the NPPF mean that some protections of the Green Belt have been reduced to allow for more development to meet the current challenges of housing demand. Over the coming years, a variety of expected policies are likely to further impact the Green Belt.

### 4.1 The next London Plan

The draft for the next London Plan will be published in Spring 2026. The consultation document that was released in 2025 suggests that in order to meet the targeted 880,000 delivery of homes in London over the next decade, it will be necessary to explore releasing parts of the Green Belt for development.<sup>122</sup>

<sup>118</sup> CPRE, [Countryside next door: State of the Green Belt 2021](#), (2021)

<sup>119</sup> London Green Belt Council, ['Safe Under Us'? The Continued shrinking of London's local countryside](#) (2022) (2022)

<sup>120</sup> YouGov, [What do the public make of Labour's proposed planning reforms?](#) (2024)

<sup>121</sup> YouGov, [What do the public make of Labour's proposed planning reforms?](#) (2024)

<sup>122</sup> Mayor of London, [Towards a new London Plan](#) (2025)

The consultation document states that the Mayor plans to ensure that any release of Green Belt land for housing development “makes the best use of land and meets strict requirements”, including maximising levels of affordable housing and good transport connectivity.<sup>123</sup>

## 4.2 Homes for London

On the 23 October 2025, the Mayor was granted additional planning powers to review and call-in applications for development on Green Belt land. This means that the Mayor could take over decision making from local planning authorities, granting him more strategic control over development on Green Belt sites.<sup>124</sup>

These additional powers will require amendments to the Town and Country Planning (Mayor of London) Order 2008. The Government will consult on the proposed amendments over six weeks from November 2025.<sup>125</sup>

## 4.3 The New Towns Taskforce

On the 28 September, the New Towns Taskforce released its report to the Government on the potential location of new towns. Of the 12 sites identified, two are in London: Chase Park and Crews Hill in Enfield; and Thamesmead in Greenwich.

The proposed Chase Park and Crews Hill new town would require the release of Green Belt land, which the report describes as “poor quality”.<sup>126</sup> The Government response to the report welcomed the recommended sites and highlighted the Crews Hill site as being particularly promising.<sup>127</sup>

No final decisions on the sites will be made until a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is undertaken. The Government will publish the final SEA and the draft proposals in Spring 2026. The locations to be progressed will be confirmed soon after.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> Mayor of London, [Towards a new London Plan](#) (2025)

<sup>124</sup> MHCLG, [Homes for London: A Package of Support for Housebuilding in the Capital](#) (2025)

<sup>125</sup> MHCLG, [Homes for London: A Package of Support for Housebuilding in the Capital](#) (2025)

<sup>126</sup> New Towns Taskforce, [Report to Government](#) (2025)

<sup>127</sup> MHCLG, [Expert Taskforce recommends locations for new towns](#) (2025)

<sup>128</sup> MHCLG, [Expert Taskforce recommends locations for new towns](#) (2025)

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### Hindi

यदि आपको इस दस्तावेज का सारांश अपनी भाषा में  
चाहिए तो उपर दिये हुए नंबर पर फोन करें या उपर दिये  
गये डाक पते या ई मेल पते पर हम से संपर्क करें।

### Vietnamese

Nếu ông (bà) muốn nội dung văn bản này được dịch sang  
tiếng Việt, xin vui lòng liên hệ với chúng tôi bằng điện  
thoại, thư hoặc thư điện tử theo địa chỉ ở trên.

### Bengali

আপনি যদি এই দলিলের একটা সারাংশ নিজের ভাষায় পেতে চান,  
তাহলে দয়া করে ফোন করবেন অথবা উল্লেখিত ডাক ঠিকানায় বা  
ই-মেইল ঠিকানায় আমাদের সাথে যোগাযোগ করবেন।

### Greek

*Εάν επιθυμείτε περιληψη αυτού του κειμένου στην γλώσσα σας, παρακαλώ καλέστε τον αριθμό ή επικοινωνήστε μαζί μας στην ανωτέρω ταχυδρομική ή την ηλεκτρονική διεύθυνση.*

### Urdu

اگر آپ کو اس دستاویز کا خلاصہ اپنی زبان میں  
درکار ہو تو، براہ کرم نمبر پر فون کریں  
یا منکورہ بالا ڈاک کے پتے یا ای میل  
پتے پر ہم سے رابطہ کریں۔

### Turkish

Bu belgenin kendi dilinize çevrilmiş bir özetini  
okumak isterseniz, lütfen yukarıdaki telefon  
numarasını arayın, veya posta ya da e-posta  
adresi aracılığıyla bizimle temasla geçin.

### Arabic

إذا كنت أنت أو أحد معارفك بحاجة إلى هذا التقرير  
مطبوعاً بخط كبير أو بطريقة برايل، أو ترغب في الحصول على الملخص  
والنتائج الرئيسية بلغة أخرى، فيرجى التواصل معنا على:  
020 7983 4100 أو عبر البريد الإلكتروني  
[assembly.translations@london.gov.uk](mailto:assembly.translations@london.gov.uk)

### Punjabi

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਸ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਦਾ ਸੰਖੇਪ ਅਧਿਕਾਰੀ ਭਾਸਾ ਵਿਚ ਲੈਣਾ  
ਚਾਹੋਂ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਇਸ ਨੰਬਰ 'ਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ ਜਾਂ  
ਉਪਰ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਭਾਵ ਜਾਂ ਈਮੇਲ ਪਤੇ 'ਤੇ ਸਹੂੰ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।

### Gujarati

જો તમારે આ દસ્તાવેજનો સાર તમારે ભાષામાં  
જોઈતો હોય તો ઉપર આપેલ નંબર પર ફોન કરો  
અથવા ઉપર આપેલ ટ્યાક્સ અથવા ઇ-મેઇલ સરનામાં  
પર અમારો સંપર્ક કરો.

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