

## 10.0 Rural Environment

### Introduction

- 10.1 Much of Guildford Borough consists of attractive open countryside with a number of rural villages, many of which are of historic value and are designated as conservation areas. Most of the countryside is Green Belt and much of the southern part of the Borough is designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and/or an Area of Great Landscape Value.
- 10.2 There are many pressures on the rural environment. In particular, agricultural policy has changed and landowners are increasingly looking to diversify their activities by considering alternative uses for their land and buildings. There is also pressure for housing and employment development to take place in the rural areas. This is partly due to the high environmental quality, proximity and accessibility to urban areas and the motorway and primary road network.
- 10.3 It is likely that these pressures will remain during the period covered by this Plan and could increase as land owners seek to develop ways of sustaining agriculture and other rural businesses and make the most economic use of their land and buildings. The housing, employment and service needs of village communities are also likely to increase.
- 10.4 The protection of the Green Belt and the Countryside Beyond the Green Belt is the foundation on which the policies in this Chapter have been prepared. They seek to prevent inappropriate development in the countryside and to protect the character and function of identified settlements. However, it is recognised that development in the rural areas will, in exceptional circumstances be justified. In this context the Plan seeks to balance economic issues against the need to protect and enhance the rural landscape and areas of nature conservation value.

### Objectives

- 10.5 The objectives of the policies in this Chapter are:
1. To support and enhance the rural economy and the needs of agriculture and forestry.
  2. To resist the loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land.
  3. To protect the Green Belt from inappropriate development and maintain its openness.
  4. To support the provision of recreational facilities where they do not adversely affect the landscape and open character of the countryside.
  5. To protect the Countryside Beyond the Green Belt from inappropriate development and maintain its openness.
  6. To support and enhance the landscape character of the Borough.
  7. To protect villages from inappropriate development.

### Supporting Measures

- 10.6 The above objectives will be achieved through the implementation of the policies set out in this Plan and the following supporting measures:
1. Supporting the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty management strategy.
  2. Supporting the Heathlands Project.
  3. Ensuring that Council owned land in the countryside is maintained and managed properly.
  4. Supporting Surrey County Council's Countryside Strategy, Landscape Strategy and Woodlands Strategy.

**Policy RE1  
EXTENT OF THE GREEN BELT**

There will be a Green Belt covering the entire borough with the exception of Guildford urban area, Ash and Tongham and land to the south and east of Ash and Tongham, as shown on the Proposals Map.

- 10.7 The Proposals Map shows the precise boundary of the Green Belt, which is drawn around the urban area of Guildford, Ash and Tongham and the land to the south and east of Ash and Tongham. Ash Green and the open fields to the south and east of Ash and Tongham are designated as Countryside Beyond the Green Belt.
- 10.8 Land at Manor Farm has been taken out of the Green Belt to accommodate the University of Surrey's expansion plans. Chapter 16 University of Surrey deals with this issue in detail, including the exceptional circumstances which justify the removal of the Green Belt designation from Manor Farm.

**Policy RE2  
DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE GREEN BELT**

Within the Metropolitan Green Belt, as shown on the Proposals Map, new building will be deemed inappropriate unless it is for the following purposes:

1. Agriculture and forestry;
2. Essential facilities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation, cemeteries and other uses of land which preserve the openness of the Green Belt and which do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;
3. Limited extension, alteration or replacement of existing dwellings providing it is in accordance with Policies H6 and H9;

Continued

4. Infilling in villages to the extent specified in Policy RE3;
5. Affordable housing for local needs in accordance with Policy H12.
6. Re-use and adaptation of rural buildings in accordance with Policies RE9 and RE10.

- 10.9 The underlying strategy of this Local Plan is to direct development to the urban areas of Guildford and Ash and Tongham and, where appropriate, to identified settlements. Within the Green Belt it is the Borough Council's intention to maintain its open nature, prevent the coalescence of settlements and resist the encroachment of the urban areas into the countryside. Planning permission will not be permitted for inappropriate development which is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt. Certain forms of development may be appropriately located in the Green Belt, although these will be strictly controlled to minimise their impact.
- 10.10 Some uses of land in the Green Belt may require new buildings for essential facilities. These will only be permitted where they are genuinely required for uses of land which preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land in it. The Borough Council will require evidence that such facilities are essential as well as evidence of the environmental impact and proposals for minimising such impact. Possible examples of essential facilities include small changing rooms, unobtrusive spectator accommodation or small stables for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation.
- 10.11 As an exception to normal policy, affordable housing may be allowed outside and adjacent to identified settlements in the countryside. The approach to affordable housing is included in Policy H12.

10.12 The Borough Council has defined boundaries around free standing settlements surrounded by countryside which are of sufficient size to contain a number of supporting services and may be capable of accommodating limited development without detriment to the character of the countryside or the settlement itself (See Policy RE3).

10.13 This Policy reflects Policy PE2 Development Within the Green Belt of the Surrey Structure Plan. The only alteration to the Green Belt from the 1993 Local Plan is the removal of the land at Manor Farm to allow the University of Surrey expansion. This issue is dealt with in Chapter 16 University of Surrey.

**Policy RE3  
IDENTIFIED SETTLEMENTS IN THE  
GREEN BELT**

The following settlements in the Green Belt are identified with their boundaries shown on the Proposals Map:

Albury, Chilworth, Compton, East Horsley, Effingham, Fairlands, Flexford, Gomshall, Holmbury St. Mary, Jacobswell, Normandy, Peaslake, Pirbright, Puttenham, Ripley, Send, Send Marsh/Burnt Common, Shalford, Shere, West Clandon, West Horsley (North), West Horsley (South), Wood Street, Worplesdon.

Within these settlement boundaries new building will be permitted in the nature of infilling on land substantially surrounded by existing development for the developments referred to in Policy RE2 and the following purposes: -

1. Development of a small gap in an otherwise continuous built up frontage of appropriate scale and design;
2. Small scale housing developments appropriate to the scale of the locality;
3. Community or employment facilities appropriate to the scale of the settlement.

Continued

The above will not be permitted where it involves the loss of important open spaces, harms the character or appearance of the area or where necessary services are inadequate.

10.14 In accordance with Policy RU1 of the Surrey Structure Plan the Borough Council has defined village boundaries. The villages remain "washed over" by the Green Belt. The settlements identified are free standing villages surrounded by countryside which are of a sufficient size to contain a number of supporting services such as shops and community facilities. They may also be capable of accommodating limited development without detriment to the character of the countryside or the settlement. In defining settlements, the boundaries have been drawn to limit the areas in which development may take place to those parts of the settlement where it will conform to the purposes of the Policy, that is to say it will not affect the scale or appearance of the village or impinge on the openness of the Green Belt. The Policy does not envisage extension of the built up area of the settlement beyond the defined boundaries or other than very limited development taking place within settlements. The boundaries have been drawn to exclude low density residential areas and isolated or loose knit groups of houses. These residential areas will be covered by Policy RE2- Development within the Green Belt.

10.15 There have been minor changes to 5 settlement boundaries to correct minor drafting anomalies since the previous Local Plan. The areas where changes have been made are:

1. Albury - include the new housing adjacent to the village hall;
2. Pirbright - include the site of the former Red Cross Hall and adjacent dwellings;
3. Send - amend boundary at Vision Engineering and include commercial site on Send Road;

- 4. East Horsley - amendment to follow Norrels Drive;
- 5. Normandy - include the St Mark's Church Hall, Guildford Road.

10.16 Not all the settlements and villages in the Borough have been identified for the purpose of this Policy. Those omitted are generally smaller settlements with limited supporting services.

10.17 The Policy provides for some small scale housing, community and employment development within settlements which is appropriate to the scale of the village and the locality and substantially surrounded by existing development.

10.18 A proposal will only be regarded as "suitable infill" when it relates to the character of the surrounding area both in terms of scale and design, and when the development of the site would not have a detrimental effect on the quality of the environment. The Borough Council will have regard to the cumulative effect of development.

**Policy RE4  
COUNTRYSIDE BEYOND THE GREEN BELT**

Development in the Countryside Beyond the Green Belt will be resisted except for that related to:

- 1. Agriculture and forestry;
- 2. The reasonable expansion of existing employment uses to diversify the rural economy;
- 3. Outdoor sport and recreational uses;
- 4. Uses of land which preserve the openness of the countryside;

And the following criteria are met:

- 1. Built development is strictly controlled to that reasonably needed for the use to operate;

Continued

- 2. Agriculture and forestry interests are protected;
- 3. New buildings or extensions are located and designed to minimise their impact on the environment, are satisfactorily screened, landscaped and are constructed of external materials appropriate to the rural setting;
- 4. The development as a whole will not be of a size and scale that would detract from the character of the rural landscape.
- 5. Affordable housing for local needs in accordance with Policy H12
- 6. The re-use and adaptation of rural buildings in accordance with Policies RE9 and RE10.

10.19 The small area of the Borough which lies generally to the south and east of Ash and Tongham and part of the Blackwater Valley Area, is beyond the Green Belt and is particularly sensitive to development pressure. This land is an important area of the countryside because it prevents the coalescence of Ash and Tongham with Aldershot to the west (Blackwater Valley Strategic Gap) and Ash Green to the east. It is attractive countryside and should be subject to a restraint policy for its own sake. There are no settlements within the Countryside Beyond the Green Belt where some limited development may be suitable. The land to the west of Ash and Tongham is also designated as the Blackwater Strategic Gap under Policy R11. Any development within this area would need to comply with this Policy. The expansion of existing employment uses within this area will not be permitted.

10.20 The Borough Council recognises the benefits to the rural economy a healthy business can bring and will normally support the expansion of existing employment uses providing the criteria set out above are met.

- 10.21 The countryside provides many opportunities for tourism, sport and recreation which could not be accommodated in the urban area. Such uses can play an important part in the development and diversification of the rural economy but should not damage the landscape and heritage on which it depends.
- 10.22 Only those forms of development set out above which comply with criteria (1) to (6) will be permitted.

**Policy RE5  
AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY (AONB)**

The Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, as defined on the Proposals Map, is of national importance and will be subject to the most rigorous protection. Development inconsistent with the primary aim of conserving the existing landscape character will not be permitted.

Small scale development for agriculture, forestry or outdoor recreation as well as that in support of services for the local community will normally be acceptable provided the proposals conserve the natural beauty of the landscape. Important views to and from the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty should be retained.

- 10.23 Policy PE7 of the Surrey Structure Plan 1994 designates the Surrey Hills AONB. This covers most of the southern half of the Borough and is a landscape of national importance. The detailed boundary of the AONB is shown on the Proposals Map.
- 10.24 The Surrey Hills AONB was designated in 1958 and comprises landscape of national importance. The primary objective of the designation is the conservation of the natural beauty of the landscape. Any development deemed acceptable will need to have regard to this objective. The promotion of recreation is not an objective of the AONB designation,

although it should be used to meet the demand for recreation so far as it is consistent with the conservation of natural beauty and the needs of agriculture, forestry and other uses. The siting of major industrial or commercial development will not be permitted in this area. Only proven national interest and lack of alternative sites can justify an exception. The design, scale and impact of traffic of any development which receives permission will be controlled to minimise the environmental damage.

- 10.25 Development should not result in the loss of important views to and from the AONB.
- 10.26 The Borough Council, in co-operation with statutory agencies and other local authorities covering the Surrey Hills AONB, has set up a Joint Advisory Committee to encourage a co-ordinated approach to management.

**Policy RE6  
AREA OF GREAT LANDSCAPE VALUE (AGLV)**

Development within the Area of Great Landscape Value, defined on the Proposals Map, should be consistent with the intention of protecting the distinctive landscape character of the area.

- 10.27 The AGLV is of county importance and covers the southern half of the Borough as defined on the Proposals Map. Within this area development should have regard to the conservation and enhancement of the existing landscape character.
- 10.28 The majority of the AONB and AGLV covers the same geographical area.

**Policy RE7  
PROTECTION OF THE BEST AND MOST VERSATILE AGRICULTURAL LAND**

The best and most versatile agricultural land will be protected from development unless the following criteria are met: -

Continued

1. There is an overriding need for the development;
2. There is a lack of appropriate opportunities for the development in already developed areas;
3. The development is proposed on land of the lowest practical grade.

10.29 There are 10,043 hectares of agricultural land in Guildford Borough, of which just over 1% is within grades 1 and 2 and approximately 42% is Grade 3.

10.30 The best and most versatile land should be protected as a national resource for future generations. This is defined as land in grades 1, 2 and 3a. Once this land is developed its return to agricultural use is seldom practicable. The Borough Council will consult the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs about any development that does not accord with this Local Plan and which involves or is likely to lead to the loss of more than 20 hectares of land in grades 1, 2 and 3a.

10.31 Land in grades 1, 2 or 3a should only be developed exceptionally if there is an overriding need for the development and either sufficient land in lower grades is unavailable or available lower grade land has an environmental value which is recognised by a statutory landscape, wildlife, historic or archaeological designation and outweighs the agricultural considerations. If land in grades 1, 2 or 3a does need to be developed and there is a choice of sites in different grades, development should be directed towards land of the lowest grade. Opportunities for accommodating development needs on previously developed sites, on land within urban or settlement boundaries and on poorer quality farmland should have first been assessed.

### **Policy RE8 FARM DIVERSIFICATION (INCLUDING FARM SHOPS)**

Proposals to diversify the range of economic activities on a farm will be permitted if all the following criteria are met:

1. The proposal is complementary to the agricultural operations on the farm and is operated as part of the farm holding;
2. The character, scale and location of the proposal is compatible with its landscape setting and any area of nature conservation importance;
3. The proposal should re-use or adapt appropriate farm buildings which are available, new buildings will only be considered exceptionally;
4. In the case of farm shops, the scale and scope of the retailing proposed will not result in a significant adverse effect on retail facilities in any nearby town or village;
5. There is sufficient room within the curtilage of the building to park the vehicles of those who will work or visit there, without detriment to the visual amenity of the countryside.

10.32 In response to the changing circumstances facing agriculture, farmers are increasingly diversifying into other activities to supplement their incomes. Proposals for farm diversification will be supported subject to compliance with the above criteria. Farm diversification schemes should where appropriate, be supported by a Farm Plan, preferably in accordance with Surrey County Council's Farm Plan System document to comply fully with Structure Plan Policy RU4.

10.33 Proposals will need to be part of a genuine attempt to support an existing farming enterprise and operate as part of the farm holding.

10.34 The proposal should be in character and scale with the surrounding landscape and particular consideration will be given to proposals which affects an area of nature conservation value. In assessing a proposal consideration will be given to the environmental impact, access, traffic generation and parking requirements, the likely future development requirements of the activity and the impact on the agricultural use of the holding. Additional landscaping or other measures such as the removal of unsightly buildings which help assimilate the development and improve the appearance of the countryside may be required by condition or legal agreement.

10.35 If there are existing farm buildings which are available for re-use or adaptation, these should be used for farm diversification proposals. A condition or planning agreement may be used to prevent separation of re-used buildings where it would conflict with the aim of maintaining, and where possible improving the character and appearance of the countryside, or conflict with other policies of the Plan. This will ensure that the diversification scheme operates satisfactorily in relation to the general agricultural use of the holding.

10.36 If a farm shop is used for the sale of unprocessed goods on that farm, with a minimal quantity of other goods, that is a use which is ancillary to the use as a farm and therefore does not require planning permission. However, use as a farm shop selling a significant amount of produce from elsewhere is a separate use and therefore requires planning permission.

10.37 Account will be taken of the existence of retail outlets in nearby villages, which may be more accessible on foot or by public transport, when considering applications for farm shops and the Borough Council may use planning conditions to limit the broad types of produce sold to enable permission to be given.

10.38 In considering proposals for farm shops, account will be taken of the desirability of providing a service throughout the year which may require non local produce (i.e. produce originating from beyond the farm holding and its environs) to overcome the problems of seasonality, provide continuity of employment and ensure that a sufficiently wide selection of produce can be offered.

**Policy RE9  
RE-USE AND ADAPTATION OF  
RURAL BUILDINGS TO  
EMPLOYMENT, COMMUNITY OR  
RECREATIONAL USE**

Planning permission will be granted for the re-use and adaptation of rural buildings for, community, recreational or business use provided that:

1. The building is of substantial, sound and permanent construction and would not require major or complete reconstruction;
2. The form, bulk and general design of the building does not detract from the character of the countryside;
3. Any conversion work respects local building styles and materials and any existing architectural features are retained and incorporated into the design;
4. The use of the building would not lead to the dispersal of activity on such a scale as to prejudice the vitality of a nearby town or village;
5. Any associated buildings, structures or activities (including parking and open storage) would not harm the visual amenity of the countryside.

10.39 The re-use and adaptation of rural buildings has an important role in meeting the needs of rural areas for commercial and industrial development as well as tourism, sport and recreation. It can reduce demands for new buildings in the countryside, avoid leaving an existing

building vacant and prone to vandalism and dereliction and provide jobs. The primary objective is to sustain and diversify the rural economy. Conversions to residential use can have a minimal economic impact and therefore re-use and adaptation to residential use will not be allowed unless every reasonable attempt has been made to secure business re-use or unless residential conversion is a subordinate part of a scheme for business re-use.

10.40 Applications for conversions must be accompanied by a structural survey of the existing building together with detailed plans of the proposed conversion which must demonstrate that the building is capable of conversion without significant alterations or rebuilding of the existing structure. Buildings which have become so derelict that they can only be brought back into use by complete or substantial reconstruction and buildings of a temporary nature (e.g. timber or prefabricated construction) are not considered suitable for conversion.

10.41 Small extensions may be acceptable providing they do not alter the form, bulk and general design of the building to an unacceptable degree. Extensions subsequent to the initial conversion are likely to detract from the building's character and so permitted development rights may be removed by condition when planning permission is granted.

10.42 All conversions should be designed to ensure the original character of the building is preserved where appropriate. This can be partly achieved by retaining the architectural features, utilising existing window and door openings and minimising new openings. The use of matching building materials for any repairs, extensions or alterations will be necessary to minimise the potentially damaging effects of conversion. Proposals involving listed buildings should comply with the policies in the Historic Environments Chapter, in particular Policy HE2 - Changes of Use of Listed Buildings.

**Policy RE10  
RE-USE OF RURAL BUILDINGS FOR  
RESIDENTIAL USE**

Planning permission will not be granted to re-use a rural building for residential use unless:

1. Every reasonable attempt has been made to secure a suitable community, recreational or business re-use for the building; or
2. Residential conversion is a subordinate part of a scheme for business use;
3. A business use is inappropriate because of its location or design;

And the following criteria are met:

1. The building is of substantial, sound and permanent construction and would not require major or complete reconstruction;
2. The form, bulk and general design of the building does not detract from the character of the countryside;
3. Any conversion work respects local building styles and materials and any existing architectural features are retained and incorporated into the design;
4. Any associated buildings, structures or activities (including parking and open storage) would not harm the visual amenity of the countryside;
5. The proposal does not have a materially greater impact than the present use on the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land in it.

10.43 In the event of an applicant being unable to find an alternative business, community or recreational re-use, the Borough Council may consider residential re-use. In these instances the applicant will be expected to produce evidence that the

premises have been marketed for a suitable business or community use at a reasonable price and for a period of 12 months prior to the submission of an application. Residential conversions may have a part to play in meeting identified needs for new market or affordable housing. However, conversion to business use will always take preference. There may be instances where it would be inappropriate to require re-use for business purposes. An example may be where a building is located close to other existing dwellings and the introduction of a business use would be detrimental to residential amenities. In such cases the applicant will not be expected to provide evidence that the premises have been marketed for a suitable business or community use.

10.44 Any application would need to comply with the criteria set out above. Proposals involving listed buildings should comply with the policies in the Historic Environments Chapter, in particular Policy HE2 - Changes of Use of Listed Buildings.

**Policy RE11  
NEW AGRICULTURAL DWELLINGS**

Planning permission will not be granted to site a permanent dwelling for an agricultural or forestry worker in the countryside outside defined settlement boundaries unless:

1. A dwelling and its proposed siting on an agricultural or forestry holding are essential for the efficient running of the enterprise there;
2. The need is for the accommodation of a full time worker or one who is primarily employed in agriculture;
3. The unit and the agricultural or forestry activity concerned have been established for at least 3 years, have been profitable for at least one of them, are currently financially sound and have a clear prospect of remaining so;

Continued

4. No other housing accommodation is available locally to meet the need;
5. The necessary accommodation cannot be provided by the conversion of a building on the holding;
6. The new dwelling is to be sited close to any farmstead or any other group of rural buildings on the holding; and
7. The new dwelling is no larger in size than is justified by the needs of the enterprise or more expensive to construct than the income of the enterprise can sustain.

If planning permission is granted for a dwelling for an agricultural or forestry worker on a holding in the countryside, it will limit the occupation of the dwelling to a person solely or mainly working, or last working, in the locality in agriculture or forestry, or a widow or widower of such a person, and to any resident dependants. An occupancy condition will also be imposed on any other existing dwellings on the unit, which are under the control of the applicant, do not have occupancy conditions and are needed in connection with the farm. Permission for the discharge of such conditions will be granted only when the Borough Council is satisfied that the long term agricultural need for the dwelling has ceased both on the holding and in the locality.

10.45 Accommodation to enable agricultural workers to live at or near their place of work is one of the circumstances in which residential development in the countryside may be justified. Applications for agricultural dwellings must be accompanied by an appraisal of the operation of the holding prepared by an expert agricultural consultant. This must demonstrate that the stated intentions are genuine, reasonably likely to materialise, capable of being sustained for a reasonable period of time and the needs of the enterprise require one or more of

the people engaged in it to live nearby. Within the appraisal the Borough Council will expect a functional test, and in certain circumstances a financial test, referred to in Annex I of PPG 7 The Countryside - Environmental Quality and Economic and Social Development.

- 10.46 In the context of this Policy, the word "essential" in criterion 1 refers to the needs of the agricultural enterprise at the holding and not to the personal preferences or circumstances of the applicant, the owner or manager of the enterprise or the worker for whom the house is intended.
- 10.47 The Borough Council is conscious of the need to ensure agricultural dwellings are available in the longer term for other workers in the locality if the agricultural need of the holding no longer exists. Agricultural holdings should be of a size that is affordable to other agricultural workers whilst still providing a reasonable standard of accommodation.
- 10.48 Dwellings should be sited to minimise their visual impact by placing them close to existing buildings and avoiding skylines or other prominent locations. Where possible buildings should make use of existing screening. The dwelling should respect traditional building styles in its design.
- 10.49 When planning permission is granted for an agricultural dwelling a condition is normally imposed which states that, "the occupation of the dwelling shall be limited to a person solely or mainly working, or last working, in the locality in agriculture or in forestry, or a widow or widower of such a person, and to any resident dependants".
- 10.50 This condition will ensure that the dwelling is kept available to meet the needs of other agricultural businesses in the locality if it is no longer needed by the original business, thus avoiding a proliferation of dwellings in the open countryside.

- 10.51 Applications to remove such a condition will require an agricultural assessment similar to that submitted when the dwelling was originally permitted. This will demonstrate whether or not the long term agricultural need for the dwelling has ceased. Evidence must be produced to show that the dwelling has been offered for sale at a price reflecting the occupancy condition, details of which must be included in the sales particulars.
- 10.52 When granting planning permission for a new agricultural dwelling, the Borough Council may impose an occupancy condition not only on the dwelling itself but also on any existing dwellings on the unit which are under the control of the applicant, do not have occupancy conditions and need at the time of the application to be used in connection with the farm.

**Policy RE12  
TEMPORARY HOUSING  
ACCOMMODATION IN THE  
COUNTRYSIDE FOR AN  
AGRICULTURAL OR FORESTRY  
WORKER.**

Planning permission will not be granted to site a caravan or other temporary housing accommodation for an agricultural or forestry worker in the countryside outside defined settlement boundaries unless:

1. Such accommodation and its siting on an agricultural or forestry holding are essential for the efficient development and running of the enterprise there;
2. The need is for accommodation for a full time worker or one who is primarily employed in agriculture and does not relate to a part time requirement;
3. There is clear evidence that the enterprise has been planned on a sound financial basis and that there is a firm intention and ability to develop it;

Continued

- 4. No other housing accommodation is already available locally to meet the need;
  - 5. The necessary accommodation cannot be provided by the conversion of a building on the holding;
  - 6. The temporary accommodation is to be sited close to any farmstead or other group of rural buildings on the holding.
- If a temporary planning permission is granted for a dwelling, it will:
- 1. Limit the permission to no more than 3 years;
  - 2. Limit the occupation of the accommodation to a person solely or mainly working, or last working in the locality in agriculture or forestry, or a widow or widower of such a person and to any resident dependants;
  - 3. Require the removal of the temporary accommodation within 3 months after the expiry of the permission;
  - 4. Require the restoration of the site within 12 months after the expiry of the permission in accordance with a scheme agreed with the borough council unless permission is granted for a permanent dwelling there.

10.53 The restrictive policy approach to permanent agricultural dwellings also applies to temporary dwellings. If a new dwelling is essential to support a new farming activity, whether on a newly created agricultural unit or an established one, it should normally for the first three years be provided by a caravan, or other temporary accommodation. This is because the purpose of granting permission for temporary accommodation is usually to allow the enterprise to demonstrate that it is viable and therefore that there is an essential need for the permanent accommodation.

10.54 If permission for temporary accommodation is granted, permission for a permanent dwelling will not be granted unless the application complies with Policy RE11 New Agricultural Dwellings. The Borough Council is unlikely to grant successive extensions to a temporary permission over a period of more than 3 years.

**Policy RE13  
NEW AGRICULTURAL BUILDINGS**

New agricultural buildings will be permitted if the following criteria are met:

- 1. They are reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture within the unit;
- 2. The buildings are located with particular care to minimise their effect on the landscape and are not sited in a prominent or exposed location;
- 3. The size, design, materials and colour of the building are compatible with the setting in the landscape, and adjoining buildings;
- 4. Where the use of the new building requires surveillance it is sited to enable this to be provided from existing farm dwellings where appropriate.

10.55 The Borough Council wishes to maintain the attractive rural character of the countryside. Where planning permission is required for an agricultural building, the Borough Council will wish to be satisfied that the proposal is necessary for the activity of the holding and it is sited and designed to minimise its impact on the countryside.

10.56 Where appropriate, the Borough Council will seek the advice of its agricultural adviser to establish whether a proposed agricultural building is necessary for the needs of the holding.

10.57 New buildings should normally form part of a group rather than stand in isolation, and relate to existing buildings in size and colour. To reduce the visual impact buildings should not be sited on skylines and should where possible be screened by existing or new landscaping.

10.58 The choice of design and materials and the relationship of texture and colour to existing development and local building styles are important considerations. The Borough Council will seek to minimise the impact of farm buildings in the countryside through its control over design and use of materials. Particularly high standards of design and materials will be required where a new building is closely related to buildings of traditional design or is located in the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or Area of Great Landscape Value.

**Policy RE14  
EXTENSION OF RESIDENTIAL  
CURTILAGES INTO THE  
COUNTRYSIDE**

Permission will not normally be granted for the extension of residential curtilages into the countryside.

10.59 The inclusion of farmland and other rural land uses within the curtilage of a dwelling is a material change of use from agriculture that requires planning permission. Planning applications for such developments will not normally be granted as the sub-urbanising effect of garden fences, garden buildings, and all the other domestic paraphernalia, is likely to be harmful to the character and openness of the countryside. Even with the mitigating effect of the removal of permitted development rights, gardens still have to be fenced and have quite different visual characteristics from farmland.

10.60 As an exception to this Policy, planning permission may be granted for a small extension to a residential curtilage where an existing garden is severely restricted in size provided that it would not harm the character and openness of the

countryside and it would not result in the loss of important natural features. Where planning permission is granted, it is likely that permitted development rights would be removed to ensure that the Borough Council retained control over the types of buildings constructed and the means of enclosure.

10.61 For the purposes of this Policy, the countryside refers to land designated as Green Belt and the Countryside Beyond the Green Belt.

**Major Developed Sites in the Green Belt**

10.62 The Council has drawn up the following criteria to assess and identify major developed sites in the Green Belt in Guildford Borough: -  
Sites should:

1. Have a substantial footprint of development containing a range of buildings which cumulatively have a significant impact on the openness of the Green Belt; and
2. Have an identifiable core of buildings which can accommodate limited infill development without having any greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development; or
3. Offer the opportunity for environmental improvement through partial or complete redevelopment.

The Council considers that BTRE Vokes, Normandy; HM Prison, Send; the Research Institute, Pirbright; Merrist Wood College and the Peasmarsh Industrial Estate satisfy these criteria and has identified them as Major Developed Sites in the Green Belt.

**Policy RE15  
MAJOR DEVELOPED SITES IN THE  
GREEN BELT**

The council has identified the following major developed sites in the Green Belt:

BTRE Vokes, Normandy

HM Prison, Send

Research Institute, Pirbright

Merrist Wood College, and

Peasmarsh Industrial Estate.

**A. Infilling**

Within the sites defined on the Proposals Map limited infilling will be permitted where it would:

1. Have no greater impact on the purposes of including land in the Green Belt than the existing development;
2. Not exceed the height of the existing buildings; and
3. Not lead to a major increase in the developed proportion of the site.

**B. Redevelopment within these sites will be permitted where it would:**

1. Have no greater impact than the existing development on the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land in it, and where possible have less;
2. Contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the use of land in Green Belts;
3. Not exceed the height of the existing buildings; and
4. Not occupy a larger area of the site than the existing buildings (unless this would achieve a reduction in height, which would benefit visual amenity).

10.63 For the purposes of this Policy, "infilling" means the filling of small gaps between built development.

10.64 The relevant area for the purposes of B(4) is the aggregate ground floor area of the existing building (the footprint) excluding temporary buildings, open spaces with direct external access between wings of a building and areas of hardstanding.

10.65 In considering proposals for the redevelopment of major developed sites, the Council will have regard to not only the footprint of the existing building but also the character and dispersal of the proposed redevelopment. The location of new buildings will be decided having regard to the openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land in it, the objectives for the use of land in the Green Belt, the main features of the landscape and the need to integrate the new development with its surroundings. Also, the site will be considered as a whole, whether or not all the buildings are to be redeveloped. The test of area in paragraph 10.64 relates to the redevelopment of the entire site; any proposals for partial redevelopment should be put forward in the context of the comprehensive long-term plans for the whole site.

10.66 Proposals will also be considered in the light of all material considerations, including for example visual amenity and the traffic and travel implications of redevelopment.

10.67 In granting planning permission for the redevelopment of major developed sites, the Council will consider whether to impose conditions to ensure that buildings which are not to be retained permanently are demolished as new buildings are erected, thus keeping the total developed area under control.

