



GREEN BELT EXCEPTIONAL
CIRCUMSTANCES NOTE

THORPE

LAND EAST OF TEN ACRE LANE &
NORTH OF COLDHARBOUR LANE

Green Belt – Exceptional Circumstances Note

Land East of Ten Acre Lane and North of Coldharbour Lane, Thorpe

The emerging Thorpe Neighbourhood Plan seeks to respond to the needs of the community in the context of the emerging Runnymede Local Plan.

The emerging Runnymede Local Plan has signalled the need to review Green Belt boundaries in the borough (see paragraph 5.2 and 5.9, and the Council's Exceptional Circumstances paper, January 2018 with April 2018 addendum) to meet housing needs. This is in addition to the need to review villages that are washed over by the Green Belt in response to paragraph 140 of the NPPF (2019). In addition, the emerging Neighbourhood Plan is seeking to identify local needs, which are not reflected in the Local Plan. These include:

- The need for additional car parking to meet the needs of the community;
- An area of open space for the community with associated facilities;
- Improved access to the countryside;
- Housing to meet the needs of the community, to include affordable but also two- and three-bedroom homes available in the open market.

The Borough Council has undertaken a review of the Green Belt around Thorpe in order to remove Thorpe from the Green Belt (see paragraph 140 of the NPPF). This, we would suggest, is a 'policy off' position i.e. it does not seek to allocate development or land to meet the identified needs of the community.

As the Local Plan has signalled a need to release land from the Green Belt, it is open to the Neighbourhood Plan, pursuant to NPPF paragraph 136, to review the Green Belt. In doing so, it must have regard to the advice at paragraphs 137 to 139 of the NPPF. Paragraph 138 advises that when reviewing Green Belt boundaries, the need to promote sustainable patterns of development should be taken into account. In addition, plans "*..should ..set out ways in which the impact of removing land from the Green Belt can be offset through compensatory improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of remaining Green Belt land*".

Whilst some of the housing needs of the community can be addressed in Thorpe, the community needs are more locationally specific if provision is to meet the identified needs. The core of the village is centred around the Church and Village Hall on Coldharbour Lane at the heart of the Thorpe Conservation Area. It is these functions that generate the need for car parking to be provided in close proximity along with the Cemetery on Ten Acre Lane.

The CEMEX land is the most suitable site to meet these community needs. It is located within close proximity of the Church, Village Hall and Cemetery. The community offer will be funded by the release of land to provide new housing, which will also fund the laying out of a 10.16 ha country park, which will enhance the environmental quality and accessibility of the remaining Green Belt, as per paragraph 138 of the NPPF.

The scheme will provide for a new robust Green Belt boundary, through additional planting, which will reflect the historic field boundaries and reintroduce landscape character.

BARTON WILLMORE

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