



Campaign to Protect  
Rural England

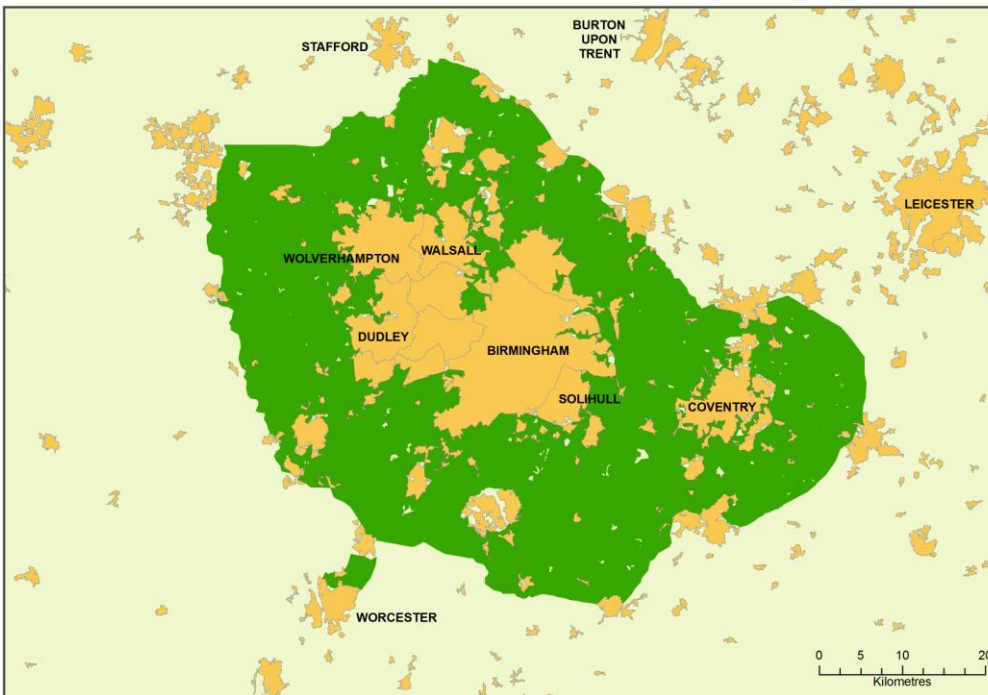
## Green Belts: a greener future A joint report by CPRE and Natural England



# West Midlands Green Belt

**Land Area: 224,954 hectares (0.5% of the total land area of England, 13,050,388 ha).**

**Total area of all Green Belts in England: 1.6 million hectares (13% of England's total land area).**



## Key Facts

January 2010

Green Belt fact sheets  
covered in this series:

England  
London (Metropolitan)  
Avon  
Burton/Swadlincote  
Cambridge  
Gloucester/Cheltenham  
North West  
Nottingham/Derby  
Oxford  
Hampshire/Dorset  
South & West Yorkshire  
Stoke-on-Trent  
Tyne & Wear  
**West Midlands**  
York

## What kind of place is the West Midlands Green Belt?

- The overall land cover is similar to England as a whole, being mainly arable land, improved grassland and semi-natural grassland, but there is a higher proportion of woodland than for England as a whole.
- A relatively high proportion of land is in agricultural use and of the best and most versatile quality.
- Most (72%) of the landscape is 'diverging' or transforming in character.

These fact sheets support the report 'Green Belts: a greener future' available to download from: [www.cpre.org.uk](http://www.cpre.org.uk)  
[www.naturalengland.org.uk](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk)

## Agriculture

18.9% (compared with 17% of land nationally) is Grade 1 or Grade 2, or the ‘best and most versatile’ agricultural land.

72% (compared with 71% of land nationally) or 160,873ha is currently in agricultural use.

56% (89,873 ha) of the total agricultural land<sup>1</sup> is subject to Natural England funding supporting environmentally sensitive farming (‘agri-environment schemes’. 67% of agricultural land nationally, and 53% of Green Belt agricultural land, is subject to agri-environment schemes).

## Landscape Quality

2.6% (5,917ha) of the West Midlands Green Belt coincides with land designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Overall AONBs cover 2,064,684 ha, or 15.8% of England. Most (72%) of the landscape is ‘diverging’ or transforming in character, with the character of 22% maintained. Pressure for development around major settlements and roads is a main concern along with loss of grassland a reduction in economically active farm units. Particular strengths are the excellent water quality and reduced agricultural intensity.

## Nature Conservation

3,599ha are registered as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). This represents 2% of the West Midlands Green Belt, and 0.3% of the national total of SSSI land. A further 1,125ha are Local Nature Reserves.

## Public Access and Recreation

16 metres of public rights of way per hectare (nationally there are 14 metres per ha) and 2509 ha of open access land.

3,358ha of Country Parks (1.5% of the overall land area. 0.3%, or 42,135 ha, of land nationally is Country Park).

4,685 ha is Registered (historic) Park and Garden (2.1% of the overall land area; the national total is 170,734 ha).

## Broad-Leaf and Mixed Woodland

11.3% (compared with 8% of land nationally) or 25,531 hectares of the land area is broadleaf and mixed woodland.

## Public Aspirations

Asked what Green Belt activities they would like to undertake in the next twelve month, the public in the West Midlands most commonly chose

- Visiting Green Belt land on a day out with family/friends
- Visiting Green Belt land to get peace and quiet
- And, jointly, visiting Green Belt land to keep fit and visiting Green Belt for another leisure activity or purpose

When asked what they would like to see more of in the Green Belt, the public in the West Midlands were keen to see

- Nature reserves
- Woodland walks
- New parks

71% of the public in the West Midlands agreed that they would buy food known to have been grown or produced by farmers in the Green Belt local to them rather than buy food produced elsewhere.

---

<sup>1</sup> Note that the total for agricultural land on which the percentage covered by agri-environment schemes is based is higher than the total for agricultural land currently in use. This is because a small area of land classed as ‘agricultural’ is not currently in use.