Green Belt Guidance Update

New guidance[1], (referencing para 159 of NPPF) published on Monday 6 October 2014, reaffirms that '*Local Authorities should prepare a Strategic Housing Market Assessment, to assess their full housing market needs*'. The guidance states that in doing so (the LPA) should '*take account of constraints such as Green Belt, which indicate that development should be restricted and which may restrain the ability of an authority to meet its need*'.

In addition, New guidance[2], (referencing paras 9, 14 and 83 of NPPF) also published on Monday 6 October 2014, states that the '*NPPF should be read as a whole: need alone is not the only factor to be considered when drawing up a Local Plan*'.

The guidance states that '*LPA's should through their Local Plans meet their objectively assessed needs unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole, or specific policies in the Framework indicate development should be restricted. Such policies include those relating to Birds and Habitats Directives, and/or designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest;* **land designated as Green Belt***, Local Green Space, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Heritage Coast or within a National Park or the Broads; designated heritage assets; and locations at risk of flooding or coastal erosion*'.

The new guidance does not alter the position set out by the applicant for the A6 to Manchester Airport Relief Road in terms of Green Belt policy. It does however reinforce the need for a LPA to weigh assessed needs (including residential) against specific environmental/heritage restrictions, including Green Belt – and that this may restrain the ability of an authority to meet its need.

Alan Houghton

URS

13th October 2014

---

[1] The new guidance is available via the following link: National Planning Policy Guidance.
[2] The new guidance is available via the following link: National Planning Policy Guidance.