



Background Paper for Local Development Plan 2: Green Wedges

Development Plans

September 2019

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Introduction

- 1.1 The review of the Local Development Plan 'Planning Pembrokeshire's Future' (adopted February 2013) commenced 5th May 2017. This background paper has been prepared to help inform the Green Wedges policy of LDP 2 and is part of a number of background documents which will update the evidence base for the Local Development Plan Review.
- 1.2 The adopted Local Development Plan does not define green belts but does designate a number of green wedges. This paper discusses whether or not it would be appropriate to identify green belts through LDP 2 and also reviews the sites currently designated as green wedge. Each of the green wedge designations under the adopted LDP are reviewed in this paper, to ascertain whether they should be retained for LDP 2 (either in their current or an amended form) or whether the designation should be removed. The paper also considers whether any new green wedges should be designated.
- 1.3 This background paper has been prepared in the context provided by the LDP Preferred Strategy and the amended settlement hierarchy that followed this, which is based on the Wales Spatial Plan and the Council's Rural Facilities Survey Report (April 2019) and the Urban and Rural Settlements Report (in development September 2019)

National planning policy

- 2.1 Planning policy on the designation of green belts and green wedges is contained in the Welsh Assembly Government's Planning Policy Wales (Section 3.60, Edition 10, December 2018) where it outlines the expectation that they will be defined on the LDP Proposals. PPW provides advice on the purpose and requirements of green belts and green wedges, in order to prevent urban sprawl, and states:

“Around towns and cities there may be a need to protect open land from development. This can be achieved through the identification of Green Belts and/or local designations, such as green wedges. Proposals for both Green Belts and green wedges must be soundly based and should only be employed where there is a demonstrable need to protect the urban form and alternative policy mechanisms, such as settlement boundaries, would not be sufficiently robust. The essential difference between them is that land within a Green Belt should be protected for a longer period than the relevant current development plan period, whereas green wedge policies should be reviewed as part of the development plan review process.” (Section 3.60 PPW 2018)

- 2.2 PPW states that due to their strategic nature green belts will have significance beyond a single local authority and they should only be proposed as part of either a Joint LDP, SDP or NDF, and therefore would not be appropriate for Pembrokeshire's LDP 2. Green wedges conversely are local designations, which essentially have the same use as a green belt in terms of buffering settlements, they should follow physical features and boundaries and must be reviewed at plan review. PPW paragraph 3.63 (WG 2018) sets out the common purpose of green wedges is to:

- *prevent the coalescence of large towns and cities with other settlements;*
- *manage urban form through controlled expansion of urban areas;*
- *assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;*
- *protect the setting of an urban area; and*
- *assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.*

- 2.3 There is a presumption against inappropriate development in green wedge areas, and PPW advises that only in very exceptional circumstances will departures from the plan be acceptable – for example for a rural enterprise need or if it is essential for outdoor recreation, a limited extension to a dwelling or small scale diversification (para 3.71 PPW 2018). The re-use of buildings and certain forms of development may be appropriate and these are explained in Paragraphs 3.72 and 3.73 (PPW 2018).

Green Wedges in Pembrokeshire County Council's LDP 2 area

- 3.1 Green wedges play an important role in ensuring that the landscape setting of urban areas are protected from inappropriate development, protecting open land around the main towns and tourist areas of Pembrokeshire. Taking into account PPW advice on Green Wedges, the 7 green wedges designated under LDP 1 have been re-assessed to establish their suitability for continued designation by the LDP. The main towns are defined by the Preferred Strategy of the LDP 2 as 6 Main Towns and a Rural Town. The green wedges protecting land adjacent to these towns will be assessed for their size and suitability, taking into consideration the characteristics of the land at each location, to ensure that the boundaries comply with the requirements of PPW.
- 3.2 Appendix 1 lists each of the 7 LDP 1 green wedges, recording whether they a) protect open land around a town and b) help to prevent the coalescence of two or more nearby settlements. If a green wedge does not meet the first of these requirements, it should not be taken forward into LDP 2 as it will not fit with the requirements of PPW, even if it does meet the second requirement. The penultimate column of the table records other relevant matters relating to Green Wedge designations at the listed locations, while the final column records a recommendation on whether or not each Green Wedge should be taken forward into LDP 2.
- 3.3 Any land that is proposed to lose its green wedge designation will still be protected from inappropriate development through the application of the general policies of the LDP protecting countryside locations beyond settlements. However it will no longer benefit from the added protection of a green wedge designation.
- 3.4 It is also appropriate to consider whether any new green wedges should be designated through LDP 2. For this reason, all land immediately surrounding the towns of the plan area has been re-assessed with a view to identifying any further land on which a Green Wedge designation would be appropriate – see Appendix 2.

Conclusions

- 4.1 Nine Green Wedges have been recommended for inclusion in the Council's revised LDP. Six of these were carried forward from the JUDP, one relates to an area identified for the first time in LDP 1 and there are two new recommendations. Each of the recommended LDP Green Wedges play an important role in protecting the setting and landscape surrounding the main urban areas of the Plan, ensuring their character and sense of place are maintained along with their often unique identities by protecting open land on their peripheries. Each of the Green Wedge proposal complies with the criteria for Green Wedge designation set out in PPW and each has a strong and defensible boundary.
- 4.2 Only in exceptional circumstances will development be permitted in an area that has been designated as Green Wedge – these exceptions are listed in PPW and in section 2.3 of this paper.
- 4.3 Any land not designated as being part of the Green Wedge policy of LDP 2 will continue to be protected from inappropriate development through the LDP policies that protect countryside locations beyond settlements.

Appendix 1: Appraisal of LDP 1 Green Wedges

Name of Green Wedge	Area of LDP 1 Green Wedge	Does it protect open land around a town?	Does it help to prevent the coalescence of two or more nearby settlements	Other relevant matters	Should the Green Wedge designation be taken forward into the LDP 2?
Haverfordwest / Merlins Bridge (east)	23.63	Yes	Yes	---	Yes
Haverfordwest / Merlins Bridge (west)	5.54	Yes	Yes	---	Yes
Haverfordwest / Portfield Gate	6.88	Yes	Yes	---	Yes
Neyland / Llanstadwell	4.12	Yes	Yes	This Green Wedge links to a significant belt of open land (designated as Common) at Neyland Vale.	Yes
Fishguard / Goodwick	35.20	Yes	Yes	This Green Wedge incorporates parts of the Goodwick Moor Nature Reserve.	Yes
Tenby / Penally	11.09 (in PCC planning area)	Yes	Yes	This Green Wedge extends from Tenby to Penally. As there are separate LDPs for National Park and non-National Park locations in Pembrokeshire, a Green Wedge is required in each plan to achieve the aim of protecting the open land around Tenby and preventing settlement coalescence. The National Park Authority's adopted LDP includes a complementary Green Wedge.	Yes

Fishguard Lower Town	/ 9.81 hectares	Yes	Yes	This Green Wedge protects Lower Town Fishguard (largely within a Conservation Area) from the main town of Fishguard.	Yes
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Appendix 2 – Appraisal of new Green Wedges proposed for LDP 2

Name of proposed new Green Wedge	Area of proposed new Green Wedge	Does it protect open land around a town?	Does it help to prevent the coalescence of two or more nearby settlements	Other relevant matters	Should a Green Wedge designation be included in the LDP?
Haverfordwest / Crundale	22.62Ha	Yes	Yes		Yes
Pembroke	135.7Ha	Yes	Yes	Grade 1 Listed Pembroke Castle	Yes