



**Background Paper for Local Development Plan:
Green Wedges**
Pembrokeshire County Council

Development Plans
September 2010

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1. The aim of this background paper

- 1.1 This evidence base paper discusses whether or not it would be appropriate to identify Green Belts through the Local Development Plan (LDP) and also reviews the sites currently designated as Green Wedges. The existing Development Plan (the Joint Unitary Development Plan for Pembrokeshire) does not define Green Belts but does designate a number of Green Wedges. Each of the Green Wedges designated under the JUDP (the adopted Development Plan) are reviewed in this paper, to ascertain whether they should be retained for the LDP (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 by the LDP.
- 1.2 Planning policy on the designation of Green Belts and Green Wedges is contained in the Welsh Assembly Government's Planning Policy Wales (edition 3) document. For that reason, the Council's LDP will not require policies relating to these topics. However, if Green Belts or Green Wedges are to be used, it is expected that these will be defined on the LDP Proposals Map and that an opportunity will be provided to challenge their definition through LDP consultation procedures.
- 1.3 This background paper has been prepared in the context provided by the emerging background paper on the Scale and Location of Growth and takes into consideration the settlement hierarchy proposed for the LDP, which is based on the Wales Spatial Plan and the Council's Rural Facilities Survey.

2. National planning policy

- 2.1 Planning Policy Wales (edition 3, July 2010) (PPW) provides advice on the purpose and requirements of Green Belts and Green Wedges. Section 4.7.1 of PPW on 'managing urban form by means of green belts and green wedges' states:

*"Around towns and cities there is often the need to protect open land. Local planning authorities need to **consider establishing Green Belts and making local designations, such as green wedges.** Both Green Belts and green wedges must be soundly based on a formal assessment of their contribution to urban form and the location of new development and can take on a variety of spatial forms. The essential difference between them is the issue of permanence. **Land within a Green Belt should be protected for a longer period than the current Development Plan period, whereas green wedge policies should be reviewed as part of the development plan review process.**"*

- 2.2 Paragraph 4.7.2 of PPW says that both Green Belts and Green Wedges can provide opportunities for:
- Access to the open countryside;
 - Outdoor sport and recreation;
 - Maintaining landscape and wildlife interest;
 - Retaining land for agriculture, forestry and related purposes;
 - Improving derelict land;
 - Providing carbon sinks; and
 - Helping to mitigate the effects of urban heat islands.
- 2.3 Paragraph 4.7.3 of PPW sets out the common purposes underpinning the designation of both Green Belts and Green Wedges as follows:
- *To prevent the coalescence of large towns and cities with other settlements;*
 - *To manage urban form through controlled expansion of urban areas;*
 - *To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;*
 - *To protect the setting of an urban area; and*
 - *To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.*
- 2.4 PPW advises that Green Wedges should be established through the Development Plan system.

Paragraph 4.7.11 of PPW says that:

Local planning authorities should only maintain green wedges where they can demonstrate that normal planning and development control policies cannot provide the necessary protection. They should state in their development plans the areas that require extra protection and why.

Paragraph 4.7.12 of PPW says that:

In defining green wedges it is important to include only land that is strictly necessary to fulfil the purposes of the policy. Factors such as openness, topography and the nature of urban edges should be taken into account. Clearly identifiable physical features should be used to establish defensible boundaries. Green wedge policies should be reviewed as part of the development plan review process. The general policies controlling development in the countryside apply in green wedges, but there is, in addition, a general presumption against development which is inappropriate in relation to the purposes of the designation.

3. Green Belts

- 3.1 Green Belts are a more permanent designation than Green Wedges but both help to protect open land around towns and cities. Green Belts have not been used in Pembrokeshire because the settlement pattern is dispersed and the towns are of modest size. Historically, pressure for the release of large swathes of the countryside proximate to settlement boundaries for development purposes has been on a much smaller scale than around large towns and cities, although such pressures do arise on a smaller-scale. The designation of large tracts of countryside as Green Belts is not required in the plan area and protection of open land beyond settlements can be adequately achieved through the general policies of Development Plans that protect the open countryside. However, Green Wedges provide a smaller-scale and less permanent approach to the protection of open land close to the towns of the plan area and have been successfully used for this purpose for a number of years. It is intended that these will continue to be used, although it is appropriate that those used in the current plan (the JUDP) are reviewed, to ensure that they are appropriately defined and relevant to current circumstances.

4. Green Wedge protection

- 4.1 The protection afforded by a Green Wedge designation is set out in paragraphs 4.7.14 to 4.7.18 of PPW, excerpts from which are paraphrased below.
- 4.2 PPW 4.7.14 records that there is a presumption against inappropriate development and advises that Local Planning Authorities should attach substantial weight to any harmful impact which a development would have on a green wedge.
- 4.3 PPW 4.7.15 says that inappropriate development should not be granted planning permission other than in exceptional circumstances, where other considerations clearly outweigh the harm which such a development would cause to a green wedge.

4.4 PPW 4.7.16 indicates that the construction of new buildings in a green wedge would be inappropriate development, unless for one of the following purposes:

- Justified agricultural and forestry needs;
- Essential facilities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation, cemeteries and other uses of land which maintain the openness of the green wedge and which do not conflict with the purpose of including land within it;
- Limited extension, alteration or replacement of existing dwellings;
- Limited infilling (in those settlements and on other development sites which have been identified for limited infilling by the Development Plan) – and affordable housing for local needs under Development Plan policies; or
- Small-scale diversification within farm complexes, where these are run as part of a farm business.

4.5 PPW 4.7.17 clarifies that the re-use of buildings in a green wedge is not inappropriate development but provided that:

- The original building is substantial, permanent and capable of conversion without major reconstruction;
- The new use will not have a greater impact on the openness of the green wedge and the purposes of including land within it, with strict control exercised over the extension, alteration or any associated use of land for re-used buildings; and
- The building is in keeping with its surroundings.

4.6 PPW 4.7.18 says that other forms of development would be inappropriate development unless they maintain the openness of the Green Belt or green wedge and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.

5. Green Wedges in Pembrokeshire County Council's LDP area

- 5.1 Taking into account PPW advice on Green Wedges, the 17 Green Wedges designated under the JUDP have been re-assessed to establish their suitability for continued designation by the LDP. Green Wedges play an important role in ensuring that the landscape setting of urban areas is protected from inappropriate development. However, many of the JUDP Green Wedges were designated in rural locations which do not fit with the locational requirements for Green Wedges set out in PPW. For the LDP it is suggested that only those protecting open land around the towns, as defined by the LDP's settlement hierarchy, should be retained and in these cases their size and suitability should be re-assessed, taking into consideration the characteristics of the land at each location, to ensure that the boundaries comply with the requirements of PPW.
- 5.2 Appendix 1, below, lists each of the 17 JUDP 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 the LDP 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 the LDP.
- 5.3 Much of the 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.
- 5.4 It is also appropriate to consider whether any new Green Wedges should be designated through the LDP. For this reason, all land immediately surrounding the towns of the plan area was re-assessed with a view to identifying any further land on which a Green Wedge designation would be appropriate. The outcome of this further work is that an additional area of land is considered to be appropriate for designation as a Green Wedge by the LDP. This relates to land between Fishguard and Lower Town, with details set out in Appendix 2, below. As with the JUDP Green Wedges that are proposed to be carried forward, this further designation is to be illustrated on the appropriate LDP Map (in this case, the Fishguard Inset Map) and protected under policies set out in section 4.7 of PPW.

6. Conclusions

- 6.1 Seven Green Wedges have been recommended for inclusion in the Council's LDP. Six of these would be carried forward from the JUDP and the seventh would relate to an area identified for this purpose for the first time. Each of the recommended LDP Green Wedges plays an important role in protecting the setting and landscape surrounding the plan area's towns, 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 Wedges proposed for inclusion in the LDP complies with the criteria for Green Wedge designation set out in PPW and each would be given a strong and defensible boundary. Only in exceptional circumstances would development be permitted in an area that has been designated as Green Wedge – these exceptions are listed in PPW and in section 3 of this paper.
- 6.2 A number of JUDP Green Wedges are not recommended to be carried forward to the LDP, because they do not meet the requirements of PPW. Much of the affected land will continue to be protected from inappropriate development through the LDP policies that protect countryside locations beyond settlements.

Appendix 1: Appraisal of JUDP Green Wedges

Name of JUDP Green Wedge	Area of JUDP 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?
Haverfordwest / Withybush / Crundale	61.46	Yes	Yes	Under the LDP, Withybush is not proposed as a settlement in its own right, but rather an employment area at which business and industrial uses predominate and employment allocations are proposed.	No – economic development at Withybush is a strategic priority for the Council and in this case overrides the desirability of protecting open land around Haverfordwest.
Cilgerran / Llwyncelyn	3.50	No	Yes	---	No
Hook / Maddox Moor	6.48	No	Yes	---	No
Freystrop / Maddox Moor	5.61	No	Yes	---	No

Name of JUDP Green Wedge	Area of JUDP 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?
Burton / Burton Ferry	2.41	No	Yes	---	No
Kilgetty / Begelly	5.47	No	Yes	The open land between the two villages includes sports pitches that are likely to be protected under the LDP's open space policies.	No
Carew / Sageston	4.33	No	Yes	---	No
Glandwr (south)	3.69	No	No	---	No
Glandwr (north)	0.46	No	No	---	No
Cilgerran / Penybryn	4.41	No	Yes	---	No

Name of JUDP Green Wedge	Area of JUDP 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?
St. Dogmaels	3.42	No	No	The JUDP Green Wedge was put in place to help prevent coalescence of St. Dogmaels with Cardigan. However, as the neighbouring planning authority has not proposed designation of a complementary Green Wedge, the JUDP Green Wedge does not in isolation meet the requirements of PPW.	No
Haverfordwest / Merlins Bridge (east)	22.58	Yes	Yes	---	Yes

Name of JUDP Green Wedge	Area of JUDP 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?
Haverfordwest / Merlins Bridge (west)	6.02	Yes	Yes	---	Yes
Haverfordwest / Portfield Gate	6.63	Yes	Yes	---	Yes
Neyland / Llanstadwell	2.68	Yes	Yes	The JUDP Green Wedge links to a significant belt of open land (designated as Common) at Neyland Vale.	Yes
Fishguard / Goodwick	37.56	Yes	Yes	This JUDP Green Wedge incorporates parts of the Goodwick Moor Nature Reserve.	Yes

Name of JUDP Green Wedge	Area of JUDP 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?
Tenby / Penally	11.09 (in PCC planning area)	Yes	Yes	The JUDP 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

Appendix 2 – appraisal of the new green wedge proposed for the LDP

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?
Fishguard / Lower Town	9.77 hectares	Yes	No, because Lower Town is a part of Fishguard, although it is separated from the main part of the town by open land, which this proposed Green Wedge designation would protect from inappropriate development.	---	Yes