

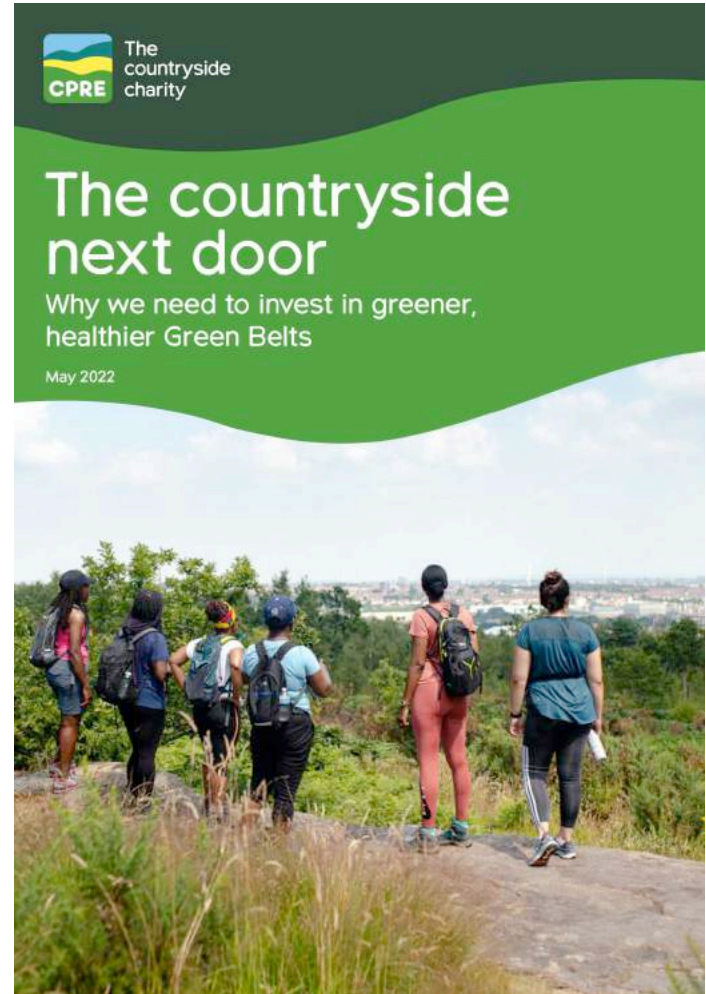
Making the Green Belt greener

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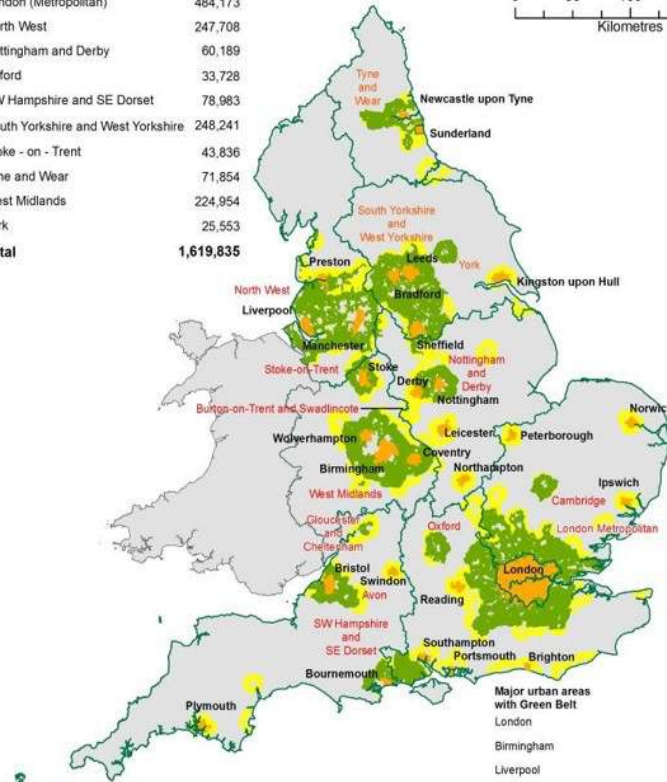
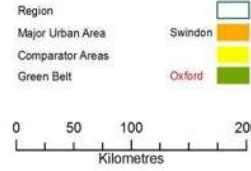
Acting Director of Campaigns &
Policy, CPRE

Colne Valley Regional Park
conference

Brunel University, Uxbridge, 18
April 2023



Green Belt	Area (ha)
Avon	66,868
Burton upon Trent and Swadincote	714
Cambridge	26,340
Gloucester and Cheltenham	6,694
London (Metropolitan)	484,173
North West	247,708
Nottingham and Derby	60,189
Oxford	33,728
SW Hampshire and SE Dorset	78,983
South Yorkshire and West Yorkshire	248,241
Stoke - on - Trent	43,836
Tyne and Wear	71,854
West Midlands	224,954
York	25,553
Total	1,619,835



Major urban areas without Green Belt	Population
Leicester	303,580
Kingston upon Hull	301,420
Plymouth	243,800
Southampton	234,250
Reading	232,660

Major urban areas with Green Belt	Population
London	7,215,900
Birmingham	970,900
Liverpool	469,000
Leeds	443,250
Sheffield	439,870
Bristol	420,560
Manchester	394,270
Coventry	303,480
Bradford	293,720
Stoke - on - Trent	259,250
Wolverhampton	251,450
Nottingham	249,850
Derby	229,400

Green Belt areas are based on 2006 data and digitised to hectare square grid. See Annex 1 for explanation of areas used and methodology.
 Comparator Areas are 5km zones around major urban areas which are not designated Green Belt.

What is the opportunity?

- The Government has a political commitment to enhance as well as protect the Green Belt
- Need for nature recovery on a massive scale
- People are increasingly valuing the countryside on their doorstep



The
countryside
charity

An environmentally valuable resource

- 23% of all England's **registered parks and gardens** (on 12.5% of England's land area)
- Within the above, four of the ten most valuable recreation sites in England (4 out of 7 outside London)
- Growing, resources of both **public rights of way** (9,899 kilometres, or 20 metres per hectare) and **woodland** (18% of the overall land area).
- 34% of all England's **Local Nature Reserves**
- 30% (or 48 sites) of all the new sites created between 2009 and 2016



The
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Land management in the Green Belt – what do the numbers tell us?

- Overall area of England farmed has decreased slightly between 2007-2017 (9.2m ha → 9.06m ha; <2%)
- Overall area of the countryside around towns covered by AES **was already low** in 2007:
 - 38% compared to 47% of England
- 53% (compared to 67% across England) of all Green Belt land classed as usable for agriculture — the ‘utilisable agricultural area’.
- By 2017 coverage had **fallen by half** in the countryside around towns:
 - 20% of area covered, compared to 27% of England
 - 28% of utilizable agricultural area, compared to 42% of England’s utilizable agricultural area

Land management in the Green Belt – what do the numbers tell us?

- 2020 snapshot of spend: agri-environment agreements currently in force involve committed spend of £3.2 billion; of this about £230 million (7.25%) is being spent on Green Belt land
- Green Belts cover **12.5%** of England's land area
- **30 million people** – more than half of England's population - live in or near our largest towns and cities; the countryside around towns is their – our – countryside next door



Food from the urban fringe (2012)



- Commissioned by Plunkett Foundation
- Focused on barriers and opportunities for small scale food production around urban areas
- Found that enterprises can provide wider health and educational benefits as well as food production per se
- Recommended that Local Plans have food strategies

Food from the urban fringe (2012)

The case studies (all in Green Belt):

- Whirlow Hall Farm (Sheffield)
- Sims Hill (Bristol)
- Essington Fruit Farm (Wolverhampton)
- Grovewood Farm Dairy (Birmingham)
- Glebelands City Growers (Manchester)
- Unicorn Grocery (Manchester)
- Shabden Park Farm (Surrey)
- Organic Lea (Epping Forest, East London)



3.3 The case studies and research findings

To investigate in detail how food businesses in the urban fringe can succeed, eight enterprises operating outside of conventional food supply chains were identified and interviewed. They include community enterprises and private businesses, and a range of business types, selected to offer insights into a range of production types, business models, collaboration approaches, scale and location.

Seven of these sites involved in primary production, although as we will see, most accommodate other activities on site, including retail, leisure and educational or social care provision. We have also included Unicorn Grocery, an urban retail unit, as its network of suppliers, including a critical relationship with another of the case studies, Glebelands City Growers, provides useful insights into a potential mode for collaboration between urban fringe producers and their marketplaces.

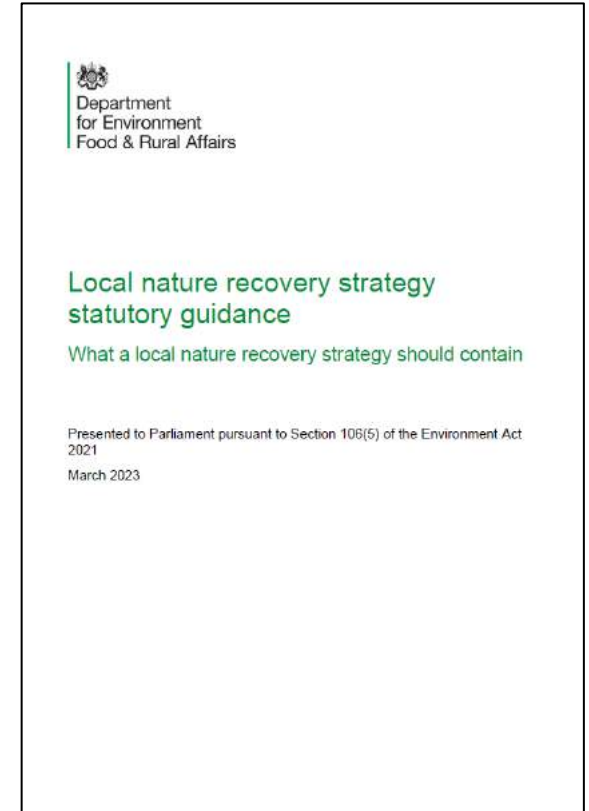
The businesses are located across England, as shown below:

- 1 Whirlow Hall Farm near Sheffield
- 2 Sims Hill the north-western edge of Bristol
- 3 Essington Fruit Farm north-west of Wolverhampton
- 4 Grovewood Farm Dairy just south of Birmingham
- 5 Glebelands City Growers just outside Manchester
- 6 Unicorn Grocery in Chorlton, South Manchester
- 7 Shabden Park Farm near Chippingwood in Surrey
- 8 Organic Lea on the edge of Epping Forest in East London



Government: tentative additional encouragement

- Environmental Improvement Plan
- Local Nature Recovery Strategies
- Planning Practice Guidance
- Land Use Framework could guide?



The propositions

- England is introducing a new Environmental Land Management Scheme (ELMs) that aims to link public money to the provision of ‘public goods’
- Land Use Framework will guide how ELMs is implemented
- At least half of all designated Green Belt land (and two thirds of the utilizable farmland) should be covered by agreements under ELMs
- Local Plan food strategy could support enterprise
- Local Nature Recovery Strategies could help lever in planning gain (including biodiversity net gain)
- Elements of Lee Valley model?

