



Campaign to Protect
Rural England

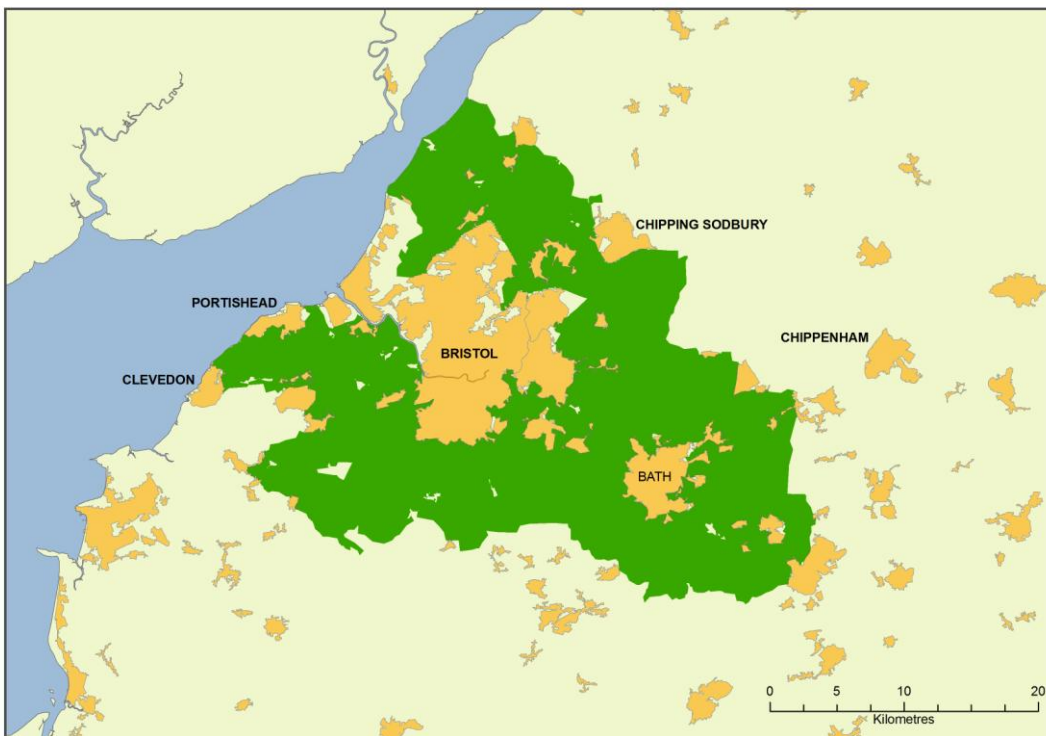
Green Belts: a greener future A joint report by CPRE and Natural England



Avon Green Belt

Land Area: 66,868 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 ha (13% of England's total land area).



What kind of place is the Avon Green Belt?

- The land cover includes proportionally more improved grassland than England as a whole, and significantly less arable or semi-natural grassland.
- The proportion of broadleaved woodland is higher than the national average.
- The majority (59%) of the Green Belt is classed as 'neglected' but it also has the most 'enhancing' (or improving) landscape of any Green Belt.
- There is a relatively high level of public accessibility with 25 metres of public rights of way per hectare of land.
- It helps maintain the landscape setting of Bath and thereby plays an important role in the city's designation as a World Heritage Site.

Key Facts

January 2010

Green Belt fact sheets covered in this series:

England

London (Metropolitan)

Avon

Burton

Cambridge

Gloucester/Cheltenham

North West

Nottingham/Derby

Oxford

Hampshire/Dorset

South & West Yorkshire

Stoke-on-Trent

Tyne & Wear

West Midlands

York

These fact sheets support the report 'Green Belts: a greener future' available to download from: www.cpre.org.uk
www.naturalengland.org.uk

Agriculture

11% (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 48,007 ha, is currently in agricultural use.

58% (27,926 ha) of the total agricultural land¹ is subject to Natural England funding supporting environmentally sensitive farming ('agri-environment schemes'. 67% of agricultural land nationally, and 53% of all Green Belt agricultural land, is subject to agri-environment schemes).

Landscape Quality

58% of the Avon Green Belt is classed as 'neglected' or 'weakened' in landscape terms and 33% 'maintained' or sustained (data is not available for the remaining 9%). The current condition of both agricultural land and field boundaries such as hedgerows are the main concerns, but the condition of woodland is good. 14,549 ha (22%) of the Avon Green Belt coincides with land designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Overall AONBs cover 2,064,684 ha, or 16% of England.

Nature Conservation

1,512 ha are registered as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) or wildlife sites of at least national importance). This represents 2.3% of the Avon Green Belt,. There are a further 264 ha of Local Nature Reserves.

Public Access and Recreation

25 metres of public rights of way per hectare (nationally there are 14 metres per ha). A long distance Community Forest path links many areas with surrounding urban communities (www.forestofavon.org.uk).

308 ha of Country Parks (0.5% of the land area; 0.3%, or 42,135 ha, of land nationally is Country Park).

1,948 ha is Registered (historic) Park and Garden (2.9% of overall Avon Green Belt area; the national total is 170,734 ha).

Broad-Leaf and Mixed Woodland

13% (compared with 8% of land nationally), or 8,855 hectares of the land area is broadleaf and mixed woodland. The Forest of Avon Partnership aims to maintain and extend forest cover over 53.3% of the Green Belt area.

Public Aspirations

Asked what Green Belt activities they would like to undertake in the next twelve months, the public in the south west most commonly chose

- Visiting the Green Belt on a day out with friends/family
- Visiting Green Belt to get peace and quiet
- Visiting Green Belt to see wildlife or bird watching

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

- Woodland walks
- Nature reserves
- Community food growing (e.g. allotments and pick-your-own farms)

85% of the public in the south west 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.

¹ 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.