

# REVIEWING LONDON'S GREEN BELT

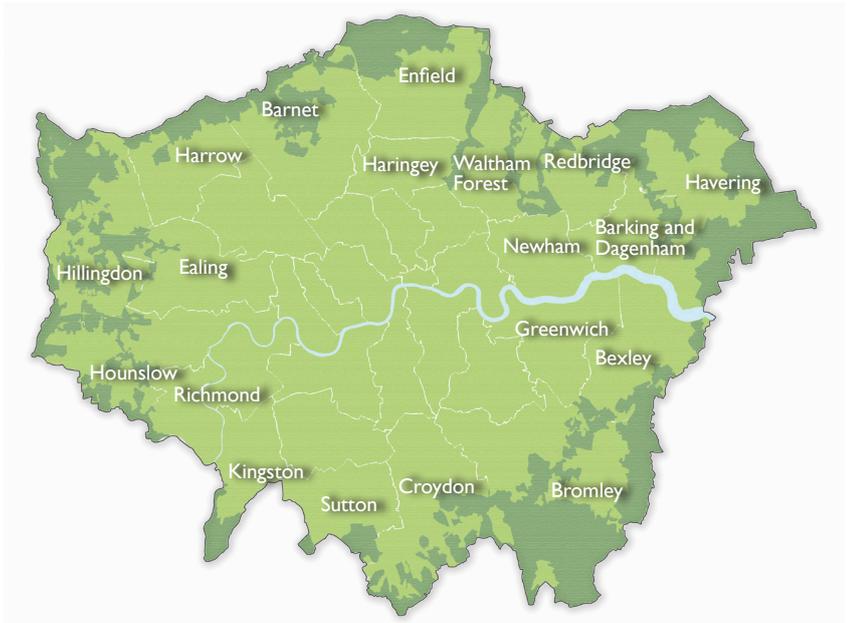
## LCCI SPOTLIGHT SERIES

London's chronic housing shortage is taking its toll on business. Rising housing costs and the lack of affordable homes within easily commutable distances of workplaces are giving rise to a host of problems including pressure to increase wages, a fall in employee productivity and difficulty in recruiting and retaining staff.

To keep pace with London's rapidly increasing population, forecast to reach 10 million by 2030, the capital will require 50,000 new homes every year over the next two decades\*.

Building on the green belt has long been a contentious subject for many Londoners. However, as London becomes increasingly short on space, decision-makers are beginning to look again at the issue.

Whilst London's many green spaces make an indisputable contribution to public life and to the capital's attractiveness as a place to live, work and visit, some of the land classified as green belt is of poor quality or of little environmental value. LCCI thinks it is time that policy-makers consider the role that this land can play in meeting the capital's housing needs.



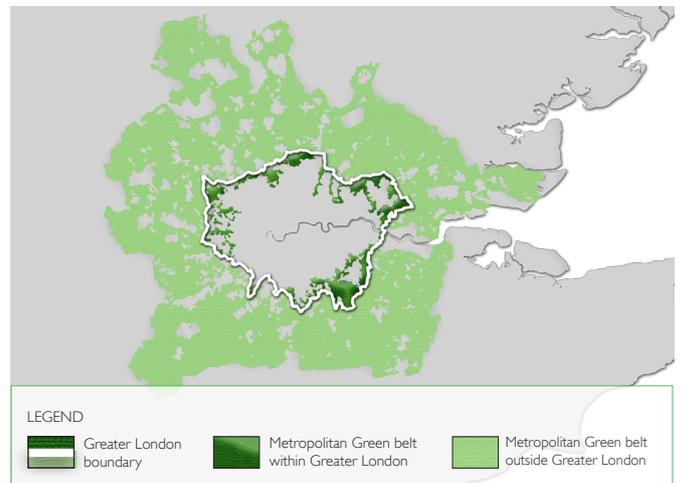
**22%** of the land within Greater London is green belt\*\*

**19** London boroughs named above have green belt located within them



## HISTORY OF LONDON'S GREEN BELT

1938	The green belt (London and home counties) Act permanently protects London's green belt land
1943	The County of London Plan defines the green belt around London
1947	The Town and Country Planning Act enables local authorities to make plans to designate and protect green belt land
1988 and 1998	Policy Planning Guidance 2 green belts states that: "the fundamental aim of green belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the most important attribute of green belts is their openness"
2012	The London Plan established Policy 7.16 on green belt. Policy 7.17 assigns Metropolitan Open Land the same protection as green belt.



\*Figure from the Fifty Thousand Homes campaign. LCCI sits on the campaign board.

\*\*Figure from LSE report A twenty-first century metropolitan green belt

Source for maps: DCLG (2016) Ceremonial County boundaries of England. Contains OS data © Crown copyright and database right 2017.

# WHAT LONDON BUSINESSES THINK

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Three in five London businesses support reclassification of either 'poor quality green belt land', 'green belt land near to transport hubs', and/or 'all green belt' around London to enable new housing development.

(ComRes survey for LCCI of 504 London businesses, August 2016)

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Half of London businesses cited the low availability of usable surplus or brown-field land as a major obstacle to building more houses in London, demonstrating the extent of the problem caused by the shortage of developable land.

(ComRes survey for LCCI of 503 London businesses, January and February 2015)

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## LCCI RECOMMENDATIONS

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London's boroughs should audit and map disused or poor quality green belt land within their boundaries that could be reclassified to better serve the capital's needs through mixed residential development or by increasing housing density around transport hubs.

Reclassifying poor quality sites would facilitate much-needed residential development without the need to relax planning regulations for building on the green belt as a whole.

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The Mayor of London should consult the London boroughs and the City of London on the possibility of including in the updated London Plan provision for housing on 'reclassified' green belt.

The Mayor is required by legislation to produce and keep under review a London Plan setting out his economic, environmental, transport and social development strategy for London. In the capital, the 32 boroughs and the City of London are required to formulate local development documents 'in general conformity' with the London Plan.