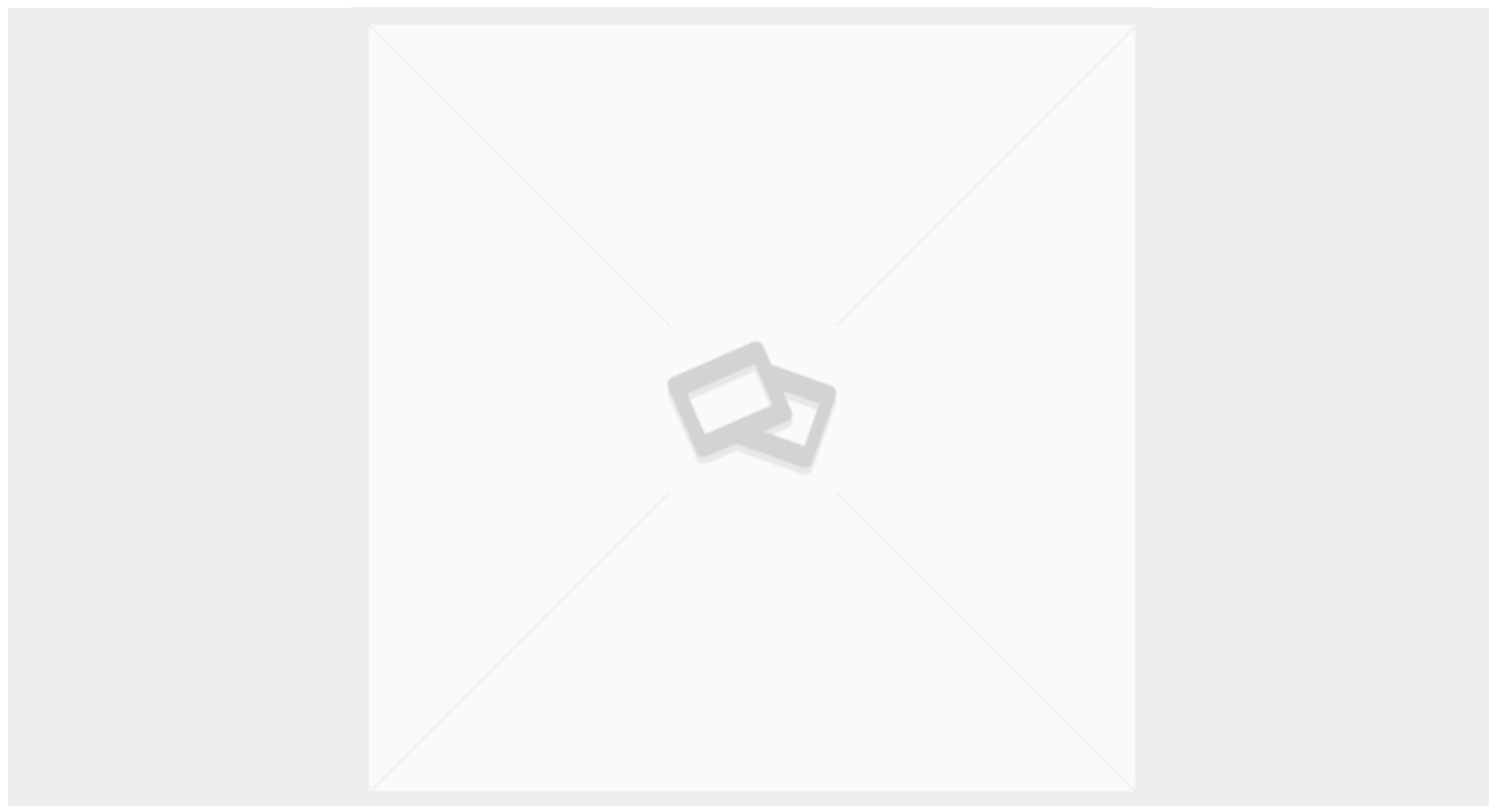


NPPF IMPLICATIONS - GREEN BELT

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Whilst Green Belt land continues to be afforded a high level of protection, the new NPPF's narrative seems to be that policy and decision making should also respond to a changing developmental environment particularly in areas where objectively assessed housing targets are not being met.

In this vein, whilst the 2012 NPPF was not explicit in stating the overarching criteria for assessing Green Belt designations, paragraph 136 of the new NPPF now directly refers to the general exceptional circumstances issue as being 'fully evidenced and justified'.

While this might appear to be a more stringent requirement, new para 137 specifies that, to justify the existence of exceptional circumstances, an LPA 'should be able to demonstrate that it has examined (rather than 'should have examined in the draft NPPF') fully all other reasonable options for meeting its identified need for development';

The positive benefits of this paragraph seems to be in its removal of certain level of ambiguity for LPA's considering releasing Green Belt in exceptional circumstances as it will really test the robustness of any preferred Local Plan Spatial Strategy and the linkage to its Sustainability Appraisal when cross referenced against what no doubt are challenging housing targets.