

The History of London's Green Belt

Timeline

AD 200 – The Romans food for Londoners

1901 – Green girdle

1947 – Town & Country Planning Act – building in the countryside

1955 – Government accepted the need for a GB – Duncan Sandys

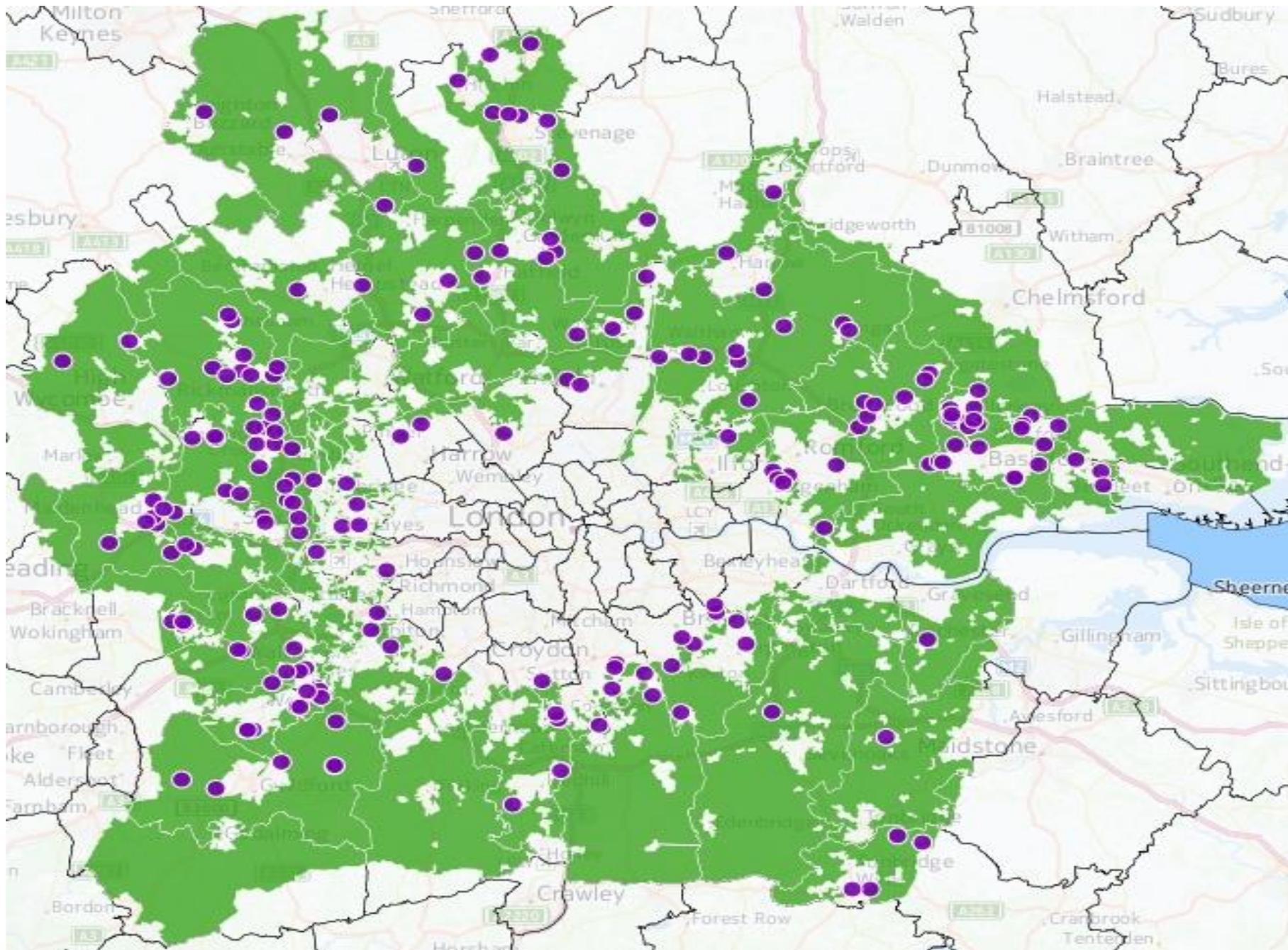
- **Prevent urban sprawl – keeping land permanently open**
- **Openness and permanence**
- **Encourage urban regeneration**

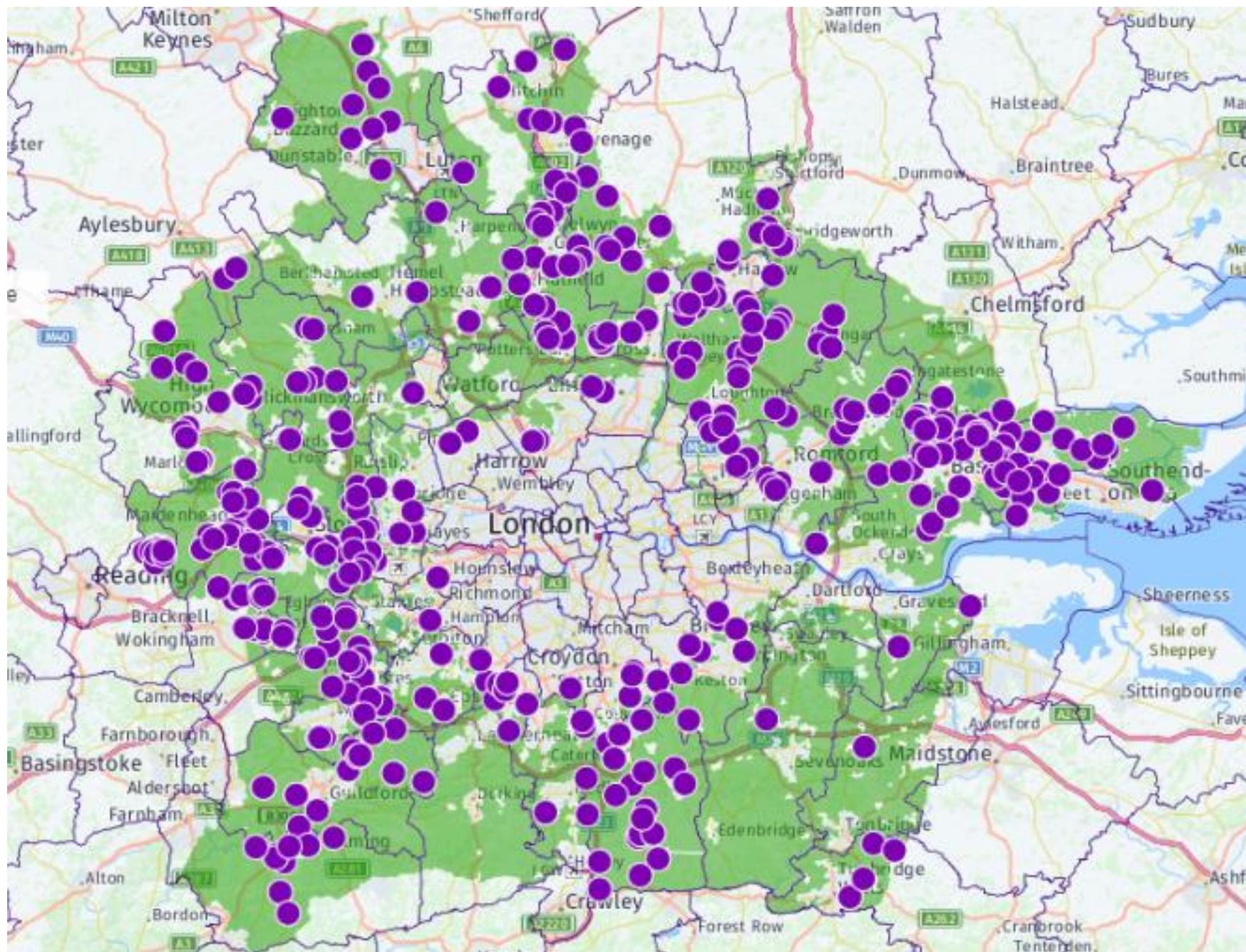
14 GBs in the country

13% of land in England

London GB - 3x area of urban London

Been successful policy – Brighton to Cambridge





NPPF – chapter 13

- **GB – five purposes**
 - a) **To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas**
 - b) **To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another**
 - c) **To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment**
 - d) **To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns**
 - e) **To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and**

Labour manifesto

“committed to preserving the GB”

Pledging not to change “its purpose or general extent”

- **Confined to garages, old car parks and ugly wasteland**

No mention of:

- **Developing “lower quality” protected land, dubbed “grey belt”**

Government NPPF Consultation

Brownfield

“Brownfield first” – will that happen - target?

Little or no greenfield until brownfield is exhausted?

1.2m million homes can be built on brownfield (CPRE 12/2022)

Up to date brownfield registers

Proper brownfield research and analysis

Will developers build on brownfield when “grey belt” or even GB will be available?

“grey belt”

- **Clear definition?**
- **Consultants – thousands of hectares of “grey belt”**
- **Need to be tested – Inquiries / high court – delay?**
- **Deliberate deterioration – ownership/options**



Green Belt

- **Treasury belief that GB does not have a value unless developed**
- **Thousands of hectares of GB under threat**
- **Including AONB**
- **Nothing to protect high grade GB**
- **Overall review of London's GB (Land use review)**
 - **piecemeal development of "grey belt" endangers development joining each other**

Economics

- **Treasury belief that** GB does not have a value unless developed
- **Economic value of GB:**
 - health & welfare
 - climate emergency
 - flood prevention
 - food security – fresh local food
 - heat and pollution relief
 - access & recreation – next door for 30 m people
 - biodiversity and nature regeneration
 - landscape

Will it solve the housing crisis?

- **Have we a housing crisis or an “affordable” housing crisis?**
- **Affordable target?**
- **Sustainability?**
- **Developers will not let it happen and will sit on land**
- **6 top developers**
- **Evidence is 4/5 bed houses – density of 14/hectare**

Will it solve the housing crisis?

- **“Golden Rules” – developers' reaction**
- **Spurious variation**
- **Skilled workforce – apprenticeships**
- **Lack of resource – planning departments**
- **Controversy – appeals / high court**
- **1.5 m target not being achieved - greater pressure on land**