

Never say it won't be built on Greenfield or greenbelt

I was recently struck by the following headline "300 houses to be built on strip of green land" because I am constantly asked if planning permission will be granted on greenfield or greenbelt sites.



I always say there is always a possibility as headlines like this clearly demonstrate.

In this case, planning permission was granted, despite the land being protected and planning officers advising against the development. Barratt Homes has been given planning permission to build 300 family homes. This includes a provision for affordable houses.

It is worth noting that an application for 300 homes and five sport pitches was originally refused in January 2005 and in 2003, one for 500 homes was also rejected.

It goes to show that when local councillors, and indeed local councils, say that such land will never get planning permission, they are making statements that they simply cannot justify. Greenfield and greenbelt land does get planning permission - you can never say never.

Local councillors and councils can be driven by political necessity. And I can truly say if you call up a local planning office to enquire whether a potential site may or may not get planning permission, it depends on the day, the time or perhaps it's the vagaries of the weather!

I have known occasions when even the same planning officer has said, "no never" on one day and "possibility" on the next.

And if the local press asks for a comment, then it's always "no never", even though you may have spoken to exactly the same person only a week or so before, who "maybe"!

This is when never equals maybe!