South Bo'ness Special Landscape Area: Statement of Importance

Other Natural Heritage, Cultural Heritage and Recreational Interests:

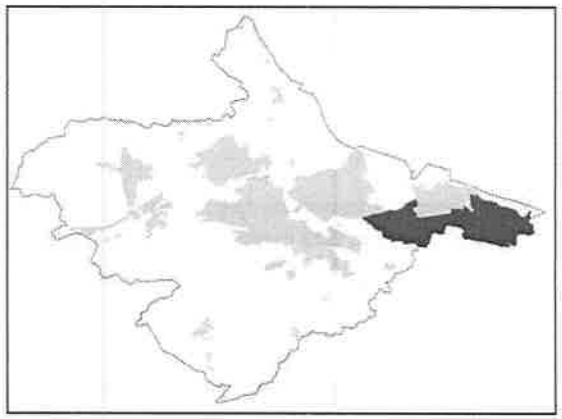
- Recreational features include: a network of core paths, John Muir Way, National Cycle Network Route 76, part of the Bo'ness and Kinneil Railway, and a golf course.
- Historical and archaeological features, including a section of the Antonine Wall World Heritage Site, Roman camps, Blackness Castle and Carriden House.
- Landmark features also include Airngath Hill at 171m, the tower at House of Binns on Binns Hill (just in West Lothian).
- Adjoins Site of Special Scientific Interest and Special Protection Area on Forth coast.
- Local Wildlife Site at Kinneil and east of Carriden.
- Bomains Meadows SSSI (south of Bo'ness) and Avon Gorge SSSI (in west of area).
- Greenbelt to south and west of Bo'ness.

Boundary:

Contiguous with the River Avon on south west boundary and the Falkirk/West Lothian boundary to the south and east. Eastern boundary is contiguous with the Forth Shore SLA in West Lothian. Northern boundary is marked by the distinct steep wooded escarpment running down to the A 904/A905, by the outer western and northern limit of built development of Bo'ness and Muirhouses and by the Forth coast between Carriden and Blackness.

Special Qualities:

- Area of small rolling hills comprising well tended farmland and some woodland blocks / shelterbelts forming an important rural backdrop to Bo'ness and to Linlithgow and providing a strong boundary between these settlements.
- Area forms the landward setting of Bo'ness and uniquely extends to the settlement boundary; incorporates an important stretch of undeveloped coast to north.
- Elevated location near coast enables notable long panoramic views out from high points to the Forth, Ochils and Pentlands and ensures much of the area is visible from the surrounding countryside.
- Includes steep wooded escarpments on northern side and wooded valley and gorge of River Avon to south.
- High recreational usage, framing countryside surrounding Bo'ness.



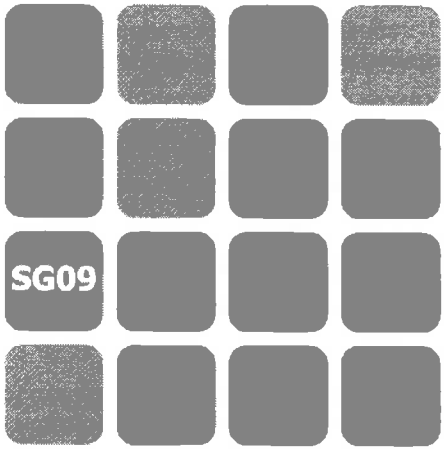
9.1 Further Guidance and Sources of Information for Developers

In addition to this Supplementary Guidance on landscape character and landscape designations, the following are a selection of local and national documents that are related to landscape issues and provide further information and guidance:

- Falkirk Council Supplementary Guidance SG01: Development in the Countryside
- Falkirk Council Supplementary Guidance SG05: Biodiversity and Development
- Falkirk Council Supplementary Guidance SG06: Trees and Development
- Falkirk Council Supplementary Guidance SG07: Local Nature Conservation and Geodiversity Sites
- Falkirk Council Supplementary Guidance SG14: Spatial Framework and Guidance for Wind Energy Development
- Falkirk Council Supplementary Guidance SG07: Frontiers of the Roman Empire (Antonine Wall) World Heritage Site
- **Scottish Planning Policy (2014 Revision)**
- **New Housing, Settlement Expansion and the Natural Heritage (SNH)** gives guidance on working with the planning system to ensure positive outcomes for landscape and natural heritage.
- **PAN 44 - Fitting New Housing Development into the Landscape** considers design principles for larger developments on the edge of built up areas and provides suggestions to achieve residential developments which are in harmony with their landscape setting and make a positive contribution to existing character.
- **PAN 72 - Housing in the Countryside** sets out key design principles, with the purpose of creating opportunities for good quality rural housing which respects Scottish landscapes and building traditions.
- **PAN 65 - Planning and Open Space** provides advice on the role of the planning system in protecting and enhancing existing open spaces and providing high quality new spaces.
- **PAN 39 - Farm and Forestry Buildings**
- **PAN 60 - Planning for Natural Heritage**
- **Scottish Government: Guide to Farm Diversification & Planning Permission in Scotland**
- **SNH: Central Region Landscape Character Assessment:** http://www.snh.org.uk/pdfs/publications/review/123.pdf
- **SNH: Stirling to Grangemouth Landscape Character Assessment:** http://www.snh.org.uk/pdfs/publications/review/124.pdf
- **SNH: A range of guidance on landscape, planning and development can be found at:** http://www.snh.gov.uk/protecting-scotlands-nature/looking-after-landscapes/landscape-policy-and-guidance/landscape-planning-and-development/
- **Forestry Commission: Forests and Landscape: UK Forestry Standard Guidelines**
- **Forestry Commission Guideline Note: Short Rotation Coppice in the Landscape**
- **Forestry Commission: Conserving and Managing Trees and Woodlands in Scotland's Designed Landscapes**
- **Forestry Commission: Forest Design Planning - A Guide to Good Practice**

Finalised
Supplementary Guidance SG09

August 2014



Falkirk Council
Development Services

Countryside & Green Belt

The Countryside

3.18 Although perceived to be mainly urban in character, the Falkirk area has an extensive and varied countryside, whose open and relatively undeveloped nature contributes to its character and identity. It is also a place where people live and work, which has to adapt to economic change. The SPP encourages development plans to support more opportunities for small scale housing developments in rural areas. However, high accessibility to the main employment centres of the central belt creates pressure for commuter housing in the countryside which will not necessarily benefit the rural economy.

3.19 The countryside will continue to be defined by reference to a system of Urban and Village Limits. The strategy of the Local Development Plan will be to direct new housing development in the rural areas to the existing villages, in order to sustain their vitality and take advantage of village services and infrastructure. However, there will be circumstances where development in the countryside will be appropriate.

3.20

Policy CG01 Countryside

The Urban and Village Limits defined on the Proposals Map represent the limit to the expansion of settlements. Land outwith these boundaries is designated as countryside, within which development will be assessed in the terms of the relevant supporting countryside policies (Policies CG03 and CG04), and Supplementary Guidance SG01 'Development in the Countryside'.

Green Belt

3.21 Green belt forms an important part of the spatial strategy for the area, its primary purpose in the Falkirk area, being to safeguard the identity of communities by preventing development which would reduce their visual separation. It provides a stronger presumption against development than the 'countryside' designation, and a more long term indication of the future shape of settlements than the Urban Limits. It forms a series of connected wedges or corridors between the main settlements. The protection of landscape setting and greenspace around towns are important related objectives.

3.22

Policy CG02 Green Belt

1. The following areas, as indicated generally on Map 3.1 and detailed on the Proposals Map, are designated as Green Belt:

- **Falkirk/Stenhousemuir/Grangemouth/Laurieston Corridor**
- **Polmont/Grangemouth/Bo'ness/Linlithgow Corridor**
- **Falkirk/Larbert/Denny/Bonnybridge Corridor**
- **Callendar Park/Woods**

2. The purpose of the Green Belt is:

- **To maintain the separate identity and visual separation of settlements**
- **To protect the landscape setting of settlements; and**
- **To protect and give access to greenspace for recreation**

3. Within the Green Belt, development will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that the proposal satisfies the relevant countryside policies, and it can be demonstrated that it will not undermine any of the strategic purposes of the Green Belt as set out in sub section (2) above.

Countryside

Development in the Countryside

5.62 The countryside is defined as those areas outwith the Urban and Villages Limits, as set out in Policy CG01 of the Spatial Strategy. The criteria for assessing housing and business proposals in the countryside are set out in Policies CG03 and CG04. Detailed guidance on the interpretation and application of these policies is contained within Supplementary Guidance SG01 Development in the Countryside. It should be noted that proposals that lie in the Green Belt will additionally have to meet the terms of Policy CG02 contained within in the Spatial Strategy.

5.63

Policy CG03 Housing in the Countryside

Proposals for housing development in the countryside of a scale, layout and design suitable for its intended location will be supported in the following circumstances:

1. **Housing required for the pursuance of agriculture, horticulture, or forestry, or the management of a business for which a countryside location is essential;**
2. **Restoration or replacement of houses which are still substantially intact, provided the restored/replacement house is of acomparable size to the original;**
3. **Conversion or restoration of non-domestic farm buildings to residential use, including the sensitive redevelopment of redundant farm steadings;**
4. **Appropriate infill development;**
5. **Limited enabling development to secure the restoration of historic buildings or structures; or**
6. **Small, privately owned gypsy/traveller sites which comply with Policy HSG08.**

Detailed guidance on the application of these criteria will be contained in Supplementary Guidance SG01 'Development in the Countryside'. Proposals will be subject to a rigorous assessment of their impact on the rural environment, having particular regard to policies protecting natural heritage and the historic environment.

5.64

Policy CG04 Business Development in the Countryside

Proposals for business development in the countryside of a scale, layout and design suitable for its intended location will be supported in the following circumstances:

1. **Areas specifically identified for business development on the Proposals Map;**
2. **Business development, including appropriate leisure and tourism uses, where a need for a countryside location is demonstrated, or the development constitutes an appropriate form of farm diversification;**
3. **Proposals involving the re-use of industrial, commercial or institutional land or premises, or the conversion of farm buildings for business use; or**
4. **Limited extensions to existing established business in the countryside;**

Detailed guidance on the application of these criteria will be contained in Supplementary Guidance SG01 'Development in the Countryside'. Proposals will be subject to a rigorous assessment of their impact on the rural environment, having particular regard to policies protecting natural heritage and the historic environment.

5.112

Policy D08 Sites of Archaeological Interest

1. Scheduled ancient monuments and other identified nationally important archaeological resources will be preserved in situ, and within an appropriate setting. Developments which have an adverse effect on scheduled monuments or the integrity of their setting will not be permitted unless there are exceptional circumstances;
2. All other archaeological resources will be preserved in situ wherever feasible. The Council will weigh the significance of any impacts on archaeological resources and their settings against other merits of the development proposals in the determination of planning applications; and
3. Developers may be requested to supply a report of an archaeological evaluation prior to determination of the planning application. Where the case for preservation does not prevail, the developer shall be required to make appropriate and satisfactory provision for archaeological excavation, recording, analysis and publication, in advance of development.

5.113

Policy D09 Listed Buildings

The Council supports the sustainable re-use and management of the historic built environment, and on that basis there is a presumption against demolition or any other works that would adversely affect the special interest or setting of a listed building. The Council recognises, however, that listed buildings will require alteration, extension and adaptation from time to time to remain in beneficial use and encourages creative and sensitive development where there are no such adverse effects. Accordingly:

1. The layout, design, materials, scale, siting and use of any development affecting a listed building, or its setting, including extensions, replacement windows, doors, roofs, rainwater goods, boundary treatments and other features, shall be appropriate to the character and appearance of the building and its setting, and should conform to Supplementary Guidance SG16 'Design Guidance for Listed Buildings and Non-Listed Buildings in Conservation Areas'.
2. Proposals for the total or substantial demolition of a listed building will only be supported where it is demonstrated beyond reasonable doubt that every effort has been made by all concerned to find practical ways of keeping it. In particular it should be demonstrated that:
   - the existing building is no longer of special interest;
   - the existing building is incapable of physical repair and re-use, as shown by the submission and verification of a thorough structural condition report;
   - the costs of repair and re-use are such that it is not economically viable. Supporting evidence should include a full economic appraisal, evidence that grant aid is not able to meet any funding deficit, and evidence that the building has been actively marketed at a reasonable price and for a period reflecting its location, condition and possible viable uses without finding a restoring purchaser; or
   - the demolition of the building is essential for the delivery of significant economic benefits for the local or wider community.
3. RCAHMS will be formally notified of all proposals to demolish listed buildings to enable features to be recorded.

244

5.114

Policy D10 Conservation Areas

The Council will protect the historic character and visual amenity of each Conservation Area. Accordingly:

1. New development in Conservation Areas should not erode the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, with particular reference to the historic pattern and density of development; its setting; the architectural style, massing and materials of buildings; landscape treatments; and boundary features.
2. The layout, design, materials, scale, siting and use of any development affecting an unlisted building in a Conservation Area, including extensions, replacement windows, doors, roofs, rainwater goods, boundary treatments and other features, should respect the character and appearance of the original building, and should conform to Supplementary Guidance SG16 'Design Guidance for Listed Buildings and Non-Listed Buildings in Conservation Areas'.
3. Demolition of unlisted buildings within Conservation Areas which make a positive contribution to the special character and appearance of the area will only be supported where:
   - the existing building is incapable of physical repair and re-use, as shown by the submission and verification of a thorough structural condition report; or
   - the costs of repair and re-use are such that it is not economically viable. Supporting evidence should include a full economic appraisal, evidence that grant aid is not able to meet any funding deficit, and evidence that the building has been actively marketed at a reasonable price and for a period reflecting its location, condition and possible viable uses without finding a restoring purchaser; or
   - the demolition of the building is essential for the delivery of significant economic benefits for the local or wider community; and
   - proposals for redevelopment of the site contribute to the character and appearance of the conservation Area.

Existing buildings shall be retained on site until the redevelopment commences.

5.115

Policy D11 Areas of Townscape Value

The Council recognises the architectural and historic merit and potential of the additional areas of townscape value identified on the Proposals Map, which do not currently have Conservation Area status. Within these areas:

1. The Council will undertake Character Appraisals to determine whether the areas merit designation as Conservation Areas, either as new Conservation Areas, or as extensions to existing ones; and
2. Development proposals will be required to fit with the distinctive character of the area with particular reference to the historic pattern and density of development; its setting; the architectural style, massing and materials of buildings; landscape treatments; and boundary features.

5.116

Policy D12 Historic Gardens and Designed Landscapes

1. There will be a presumption against development which would adversely affect the character or setting of sites identified in the 'Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes in Scotland', as identified on the Proposals Map.
2. The value of other historic gardens and designed landscapes not listed in the Inventory will be given due weight in the planning process, having regard to their historical significance, integrity and condition. Non-inventory sites will be identified within Supplementary Guidance SG09 'Landscape Character and Assessment'.
3. The Council will seek to encourage sensitive restoration and management of historic gardens and designed landscapes.

5.117

Policy D13 Battlefield Sites

There will be a presumption against development outwith the Urban or Village Limits which would destroy, erode, or adversely affect battlefield sites listed in the Inventory of Historic Battlefields, as identified on the Proposals Map. In assessing impacts, guidance provided in the relevant Historic Scotland guidance note will be followed. Proposals for the sensitive management and interpretation of battlefield sites will be supported.

245

Other Areas of Townscape Value

3.37 There are other areas of townscape which, although not currently designated as Conservation Areas, nonetheless form coherent and historically interesting groupings of buildings. In recognition of their value and in order to safeguard this wider resource, the Local Plan identifies these areas on the Proposals Map, recommends that they be assessed to see if they merit Conservation Area status, and requires that new development takes account of their particular character.

3.38

EQ13 AREAS OF TOWNSCAPE VALUE

The Council recognises the architectural and historic merit and potential of the additional areas of townscape value identified on the Proposals Map, which do not currently have Conservation Area status. Within these areas:

(1) The Council will undertake Character Appraisals to determine whether the areas merit designation as Conservation Areas, either as new Conservation Areas, or as extensions to existing ones; and

(2) Development proposals will be required to fit with the distinctive character of the area with particular reference to the historic pattern and density of development; its setting; the architectural style, massing and materials of buildings; landscape treatments; and boundary features.

Listed Buildings

3.39 There are over 300 listed buildings and structures in the Council area. These are catalogued in Appendix 3. A wide variety of periods and building types are represented from medieval tower houses to post-war churches. The largest concentrations are in Falkirk, Bo'ness and Airth/Dunmore. Policy EQ14 states the Council's commitment to conserve this resource by strictly controlling the demolition, alteration and extension of listed buildings. Controlling works within the curtilage of listed buildings, and protecting their settings are also important. Detailed advice on the implementation of listed building control is contained in guidance notes published by Historic Scotland.

3.40 Apart from inappropriate development, the other major threat facing the stock of listed buildings is redundancy and associated deterioration. A further objective of Policy EQ14 is to promote the re-use of redundant listed buildings. Whilst the character of a listed building is best safeguarded by retaining the building in the use for which it was built, this may not always be viable. Changes of use which secure the future of a building will therefore be viewed favourably depending on their impact on the character of the building. Proposals in the Local Plan cover the reuse of a number of vacant listed buildings, and their promotion for alternative uses. The Buildings at Risk Register also performs an important role in highlighted historic buildings under threat.

3.41

EQ14 LISTED BUILDINGS

The Council will seek to preserve the character and appearance of listed buildings. Accordingly:

(1) Development affecting a listed building, or its setting, shall preserve the building or its setting, or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. The layout, design, materials, scale, siting and use of any development shall be appropriate to the character and appearance of the listed building and its setting.

(2) Proposals for the total or substantial demolition of a listed building will only be supported where it is demonstrated beyond reasonable doubt that every effort has been exerted by all concerned to find practical ways of keeping it. This will be demonstrated by inclusion of evidence to the Council that the building:

- **has been actively marketed at a reasonable price and for a period reflecting its location, condition and possible viable uses without finding a purchaser; and**
- **is incapable of physical repair and re-use through the submission and verification of a thorough structural condition report; and**

(3) RCAHMS shall be formally notified of all proposals to demolish listed buildings to enable features to be recorded.

Re-Use of Unlisted Buildings

3.42 There are many traditional buildings in the Council area which, although not listed, are of architectural merit and make a contribution to the townscape or landscape. Policy EQ15 states the Council's more general support for retention and re-use of such buildings, where practical.

3.43

EQ15 RE-USE OF BUILDINGS

The Council will generally support the re-use or conversion of existing vacant buildings of architectural and townscape merit, provided that the building is structurally sound and capable of beneficial conversion, and an acceptable internal layout and level of amenity can be provided.

Archaeology

3.44 There are around 100 Scheduled Ancient Monuments within the Council area, as listed in Appendix 4. A high proportion of these relate to the Roman period and are associated with the Antonine Wall. Other important sites include Blackness Castle, Kinneil House and the two canals. These sites of national importance are protected by the Scottish Ministers and Scheduled Monument Consent is required for any development affecting them. In addition, other sites of regional or local importance are recorded in the Sites and Monuments Record which is maintained by the Council's archaeologist.

3.45 The SPP sets out the Government's planning policy regarding archaeological remains. It is supplemented by PAN 42, which provides good practice to planning authorities on the handling of archaeological matters within the planning process. Policy EQ16 implements this advice, providing for the protection of archaeological sites and their settings, and for excavation and recording in the event of development being permitted on such sites.

3.46

EQ16 SITES OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTEREST

(1) Scheduled ancient monuments and other identified nationally important archaeological resources shall be preserved in situ, and within an appropriate setting. Developments which have an adverse effect on scheduled monuments or the integrity of their setting shall not be permitted unless there are exceptional circumstances;

(2) All other archaeological resources shall be preserved in situ wherever feasible. The Council will weigh the significance of any impacts on archaeological resources and their settings against other merits of the development proposals in the determination of planning applications; and

(3) Developers may be requested to supply a report of an archaeological evaluation prior to determination of the planning application. Where the case for preservation does not prevail, the developer shall be required to make appropriate and satisfactory provision for archaeological excavation, recording, analysis and publication, in advance of development.

3.47 The Antonine Wall, together with its associated camps and forts, is the most significant archaeological feature within the Council area, running from Castlecary in the west to Bo'ness in the east. The wall was constructed in the second century AD as the northern boundary of the Roman Empire, and the Council area contains some of the best preserved stretches.

Archaeology

3.48 In 2008, the Antonine Wall was inscribed as part of the Frontiers of the Roman Empire World Heritage Site (WHS). The local authorities are committed to working with the Scottish Government, in particular Historic Scotland, in order to achieve the appropriate level of protection for the Wall, and have agreed a uniform planning policy for the Wall, which is contained in Policy EQ17. The policy has the intention of protecting the archaeological remains, the line and setting of the Wall, as an ancient monument of international importance.

3.49

EQ17 ANTONINE WALL

The Council will seek to retain, protect, preserve and enhance the Antonine Wall, its associated archaeology, character and setting. Accordingly:

(1) There will be a presumption against development which would have an adverse impact on the 'Frontiers of the Roman Empire (Antonine Wall) World Heritage Site' as defined on the Proposals Map;

(2) There will be a presumption against development within the the 'Frontiers of the Roman Empire (Antonine Wall) World Heritage Site' buffer zones, as defined on the Proposals Map, which would have an adverse impact on the Site and its setting, unless mitigating action to the satisfaction of the Council in consultation with Historic Scotland can be taken to redress the adverse impact, and there is no conflict with other Local Plan policies; and

(3) The Council, in association with partner Councils and Historic Scotland, will prepare Supplementary Planning Guidance on the criteria which will be applied in determining planning applications for development along the line, or within the setting, of the Antonine Wall.

Historic Gardens and Designed Landscapes

3.50 In 1988, Historic Scotland and Scottish Natural Heritage compiled an 'Inventory of Historic Gardens and Designed Landscapes', and work to update this initial survey is continuing. Sites are selected on the basis of historical, horticultural, arboricultural, ecological and scenic interest. Development affecting such sites is subject to consultation with both agencies.

3.51 At present, three sites within the Council area are included in the Inventory - Callendar Park, Dunmore Park and the Pineapple, Dunmore. However, there may be others such as Larbert House which are also worthy of protection. Policy EQ18 therefore extends to all such sites which may have national, regional or local importance.

3.52

EQ18 HISTORIC GARDENS AND DESIGNED LANDSCAPES

There will be a general presumption against development which would adversely affect the character or setting of sites identified in the 'Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes in Scotland' and other historic gardens and landscapes of national, regional or local significance. The Council will seek to encourage sensitive management of historic gardens and designed landscapes.

3.53

Protecting and Enhancing the Built Heritage - Actions and Indicators

Actions:

- Produce Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans/Design Guidance/Enhancement Programmes where appropriate
- Appraise Areas of Townscape Value as candidate Conservation Areas

Indicators:

- Number of Conservation Area Appraisals/Management Plans completed
- Investment in building restoration/public realm works in Conservation Areas
- Listed buildings brought back into use/demolished

PROTECTING AND ENHANCING THE NATURAL HERITAGE

3.54 Falkirk is endowed with a range of natural heritage resources, which are protected under a number of national, regional or local designations. The designations overlap in terms of both their policy objectives and their spatial coverage, and so there is merit in viewing them in a more integrated way, as a 'green network' within which the urban areas sit. Table 3.2 explains the different components of the green network, the general objectives for which may be summarised as to:

- Protect the integrity of the network in terms of its landscape, ecological and recreational functions;
- Promote investment in the enhancement and long-term management of the network;
- Promote the extension and diversification of the network to secure better linkages and fill gaps; and
- Promote better public access to the network where appropriate.

3.55 **Table 3.2 The Green Network**

Resource/Designation	Policy	General Description
Countryside	**EQ19**	All areas outwith Urban and Village Limits which are subject to general presumption against development in the interest of urban containment.
Green Belt	**EQ20**	Special areas of countryside between settlements where stronger policy presumption against development operates. Identified on Proposals Map.
Falkirk Greenspace	**EQ21**	Network of urban fringe and open space where landscape, access, recreational and habitat improvement is particularly promoted. Shown diagramatically in Structure Plan. Constituent proposals shown on Proposals Map.
Open Space	**SC12**	Areas of open space, mostly within the urban area, protected for their amenity, recreational or ecological value. Identified on Proposals Map.
Areas of Great Landscape Value	**EQ23**	Areas of special landscape character where landscape impact will be particularly important in assessing proposals.
Ecological Sites	**EQ24** **EQ25**	Sites which are protected because of their ecological value. Includes hierarchy of international, national and local designations which are identified on the Proposals Map, but also habitat types and species identified through the LBAP process and other features and corridors which may not be formally designated.
Trees and Woodland	**EQ26**	Sites containing trees, woodland and hedgerows which are of amenity, landscape, recreational, economic or ecological value. Sites within the Inventory of Ancient Woodlands are accorded particular status. Only TPOs are identified on the Proposals Map although some areas are formally designated as Ecological Sites.
Watercourses	**EQ27**	All rivers, streams and canals which serve a landscape, recreational, ecological or land drainage function. Not formally identified on the Proposals Map, although some areas are formally identified as Ecological Sites.
Coastal Zone	**EQ28**	Coastal strip along the Forth Estuary identified according to criteria set out in PAN53 and within which special criteria are applied to ensure integrated management of coastal defence, ecological, development, recreational and water quality interests.

Countryside

3.56 Although perceived to be mainly urban in character, the Falkirk Council area has an extensive and varied countryside, the quality of which has a major influence on the image of the area. It is an environment where people live, work, and visit for recreation and tourism, and which is subject to increasing development pressures for housing, business and infrastructure.

3.57 Structure Plan Policy ENV.1 sets out a policy approach of restricting development in the countryside unless a countryside location is essential or the activity is an appropriate form of agricultural diversification.

3.58 Within this context, Policy EQ19 defines the countryside by reference to a system of Urban and Village Limits, and establishes the overall policy approach to development within it, cross-referring to the other policies listed in Table 3.3 which give guidance on specific uses in the countryside. The objective is to encourage bone fide rural economic activity, whilst resisting sporadic development which would compromise the open character of the countryside. It will also encourage development to locate, where possible, within the rural villages, in order to sustain their vitality. It should be noted that in two of the areas identified for Special Initiatives for Residential-led Regeneration (SIRRs)- Banknock and Whitecross - the Urban/Village Limit is a provisional one pending redefinition of the urban area through the relevant development framework or masterplan.

3.59 Policy EQ19 also sets out design considerations which will be particularly relevant to the satisfactory integration of development into a countryside setting, and requires compliance with the 'Design Guide for Buildings in the Rural Area'. Reference should also be made, where appropriate, to PAN 36: Siting and Design of New Housing in the Countryside and PAN 39: Farm and Forestry Buildings.

3.60

EQ19 COUNTRYSIDE

(1) The Urban and Village Limits represent the desirable limit to the expansion of settlements for the period of the Local Plan. Land outwith these boundaries is designated as countryside and will be subject to the detailed policies for specific uses indicated in Table 3.3. Development proposals in the countryside for uses not covered by these policies will only be permitted where:

- **it can be demonstrated that they require a countryside location;**
- **they constitute appropriate infill development; or**
- **they utilise suitable existing buildings.**

(2) In circumstances where development meets the relevant countryside policy criteria, the scale, siting and design of development will be strictly controlled to ensure that there is no adverse impact on the character of the countryside. In particular:

- **the siting should be unobtrusive, making use of natural features to integrate development into the landform and avoiding skylines;**
- **building design should be sympathetic to vernacular building styles and comply with the design principles contained within the Council's 'Design Guide for Buildings in the Rural Areas'; and**
- **boundary and curtilage treatments should be sympathetic to the rural area, with a preference for stone walling and hedging using native species.**

3.61 **Table 3.3 Detailed Policies for Specific Uses in the Countryside**

Housing	**SC3**	Housing Development in the Countryside
Business	**EP5**	Business and Industrial Development in the Countryside
Leisure and Tourism	**EP16**	Leisure and Tourism Development in the Countryside
Minerals	**EQ31- 39**	Mineral Policies
Waste Management	**ST17**	Landfill
Facilities	**ST18**	Waste Management Facilities
Telecommunications	**ST13**	Telecommunications Development
and Infrastructure	**ST14**	Pipelines
	ST15	Overhead Power Lines
Renewable Energy	**ST20**	Renewable Energy Development
Development	**ST21**	Wind Energy
Gypsy/Travellers' Sites	**SC4A**	Gypsy/Traveller Sites

Windfall Housing Development within the Urban and Village Limits

4.10 In addition to the housing proposals identified specifically in the Local Plan, other housing development within the Urban or Village Limits will be supported where it meets the criteria set out in Policy SC2. Such windfall development will generally be on brownfield sites and will assist in meeting the general objective of recycling redundant land and minimising take up of greenfield sites. However, sites must meet requirements in terms of accessibility, amenity and infrastructure availability. An estimate of the output from windfall sites has been built into the housing land requirement calculation, and monitoring will take place to check the actual output against the estimate.

4.11

SC2 WINDFALL HOUSING DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE URBAN/VILLAGE LIMIT

Housing development within the Urban and Village Limits, in addition to proposals identified within the Local Plan, will be supported where the following criteria are met:

(1) The site is a brownfield one, or comprises urban open space whose loss can be justified in terms of Policy SC12;

(2) The proposed housing use is compatible with neighbouring uses and a satisfactory level of residential amenity can be achieved;

(3) The site enjoys good accessibility by public transport, walking and cycling to shopping, recreational and other community facilities;

(4) Existing physical infrastructure, such as roads and drainage, water supply, sewage capacity, and community facilities, such as education and healthcare, have the capacity to accommodate the increase in use associated with the proposed development, or can be upgraded through appropriate developer contributions as required by Policy SC11;

(5) In the case of small gap sites and sub-divided plots, Policy SC8 is satisfied; and

(6) There is no conflict with any other Local Plan policy or proposal.

Housing in the Countryside

4.12 There is continuing pressure for the development of individual houses or groups of houses in the countryside. Structure Plan Policy ENV.1 and Local Plan Policy EQ19 set out the broad approach of restricting new development in the countryside unless a countryside location is required. Policy SC3 contains detailed criteria for assessing the acceptability of proposals. In general, housing will be permitted where it is required to support a genuine rural economic activity. Further opportunities will arise from the rehabilitation of redundant properties and from appropriate infill sites.

4.13

SC3 HOUSING DEVELOPMENT IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

Housing development in the countryside will only be permitted in the following circumstances:

(1) Housing essential to the pursuance of agriculture, horticulture or forestry, or the management of a business for which a countryside location is essential. In these instances, the applicant must demonstrate all of the following:

- **The operational need for the additional house in association with the business;**
- **That no existing dwelling which might have served that need has been sold or otherwise alienated from the holding;**
- **That there are no reasonable opportunities for reusing or converting redundant buildings rather than building a new dwellinghouse; and**
- **That the business as a whole is capable of providing the main source of income for the occupant;**

(2) Proposals involving the rehabilitation of former residential properties, or the conversion of farm and other buildings to residential use, where all of the following criteria are met:

- **The building, by virtue of its existing character, makes a positive contribution to the rural landscape;**
- **The building is in a reasonable state of repair, still stands substantially intact and is capable of beneficial restoration, as verified by a report and certificate from a qualified structural engineer;**
- **The restored or converted building is of comparable scale and character to the original building; and**
- **In the case of former non-residential buildings, the building is no longer required for the purpose for which it was built; or**

(3) Appropriate infill opportunities within the envelope of an existing group of residential buildings, where the development would not result in ribbon, backland or sporadic development, and the proposal satisfies Policy SC8.