

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. 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

- 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
- 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
- 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 a comparable 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.

