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proposed local development plan  
**technical note 8** 2016

PLANNING FOR COUNTRYSIDE AROUND TOWNS

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 East Lothian Council's Proposed Local Development Plan (PLDP) is accompanied by a series of Technical Notes that explains how key aspects of the local development plan have been developed and give further explanation to the Council's approach to various planning strategy or policy issues. This Technical Note is prepared in relation to planning for the countryside around East Lothian settlements, including the green belt.
- 1.2 This Technical Note explains the approach that the proposed LDP takes to meeting the requirements of SESplan, Scottish Planning Policy and the Land Use Strategy for Scotland.

## 2 NATIONAL AND REGIONAL PLANNING POLICY, GUIDANCE AND ADVICE

### National Planning Policy

- 2.1 The Scottish Government's National Planning Framework 3 (NPF3) is a material consideration in plan-making and sets the framework for the spatial development of Scotland. NPF 3 acknowledges that landscape quality is found across Scotland and that all landscapes support place-making. It identifies that change needs managed on urban edges and that there is a need to improve the quality of the landscape setting of our towns and cities. It also recognises the need in parts of Central Scotland to maintain the existing quality of place whilst delivering development in areas of particular pressure, such as the East coast of Scotland where demand for development land is greatest.<sup>1</sup>
- 2.2 This ties in with the Scottish Government Land Use Strategy objectives which include urban and rural communities better connected to the land, with more people enjoying the land and positively influencing land use. Its Principals for Sustainable Land Use include:
  - e) Landscape change should be managed positively and sympathetically, considering implications of change at a scale appropriate to the landscape in question, given that all Scotland's landscapes are important to our sense of identity and to individual and social wellbeing;
  - h) Outdoor recreation opportunities and public access to land should be encouraged, along with the provision of accessible green space close to where people live, given their importance for health and wellbeing.

### Scottish Planning Policy

- 2.3 Scottish Planning Policy requires the creation of high quality places by taking a holistic approach that responds to and enhances the existing place while balancing the costs and benefits of potential opportunities over the longer term. A pattern of development should be promoted that is appropriate to the character of particular rural areas and the challenges they face. Scottish Planning Policy makes clear that different approaches to the countryside will be appropriate to different areas and in pressured areas easily accessible from a city, such as Edinburgh, the suburbanisation of the countryside should be avoided where there

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<sup>1</sup> Scotland's Third National Planning Framework paras 4.18 and 6.6 part 6 Central Scotland Green Network

are environmental assets such as sensitive landscapes. Development plans spatial strategy should reflect the development pressures, environmental assets and economic needs of the area whilst ensuring that the distinctive character of the area is protected and enhanced. It is important to direct development towards the right locations through use of appropriate planning policies including those that protect and enhance the character, landscape setting and identity of a settlement.

## **Strategic Planning Policy**

- 2.4 The expectations of NPF3 have been reflected in the spatial strategy, development and policy requirements of the Strategic Development Plan for Edinburgh and South East Scotland (SESplan). The Local Development Plan for East Lothian must conform to the SESplan.
- 2.5 SESplan Policy 1A directs the spatial strategy of the plan. It requires the local development plan to identify and justify any areas of restraint necessary as a result of environmental and infrastructure constraints. Landscape and the setting of settlements can be an environmental constraint.
- 2.6 SESplan Policy 1B requires the local development plan to have regard to the need to improve the quality of life in local communities by conserving and enhancing the natural environment to create more healthy and attractive places to live. This can include support for Green Belts which SESplan states serve to direct planned growth to the most appropriate locations, support regeneration objectives, protect and enhance the quality, character, landscape setting and identity of towns and the city give access to open space around towns. SESplan acknowledges there are a range of other countryside designations within the SESplan area including Countryside Around Towns that perform a similar function to Green Belts. Policy 13 Other Countryside Designations requires Local development plans to review and justify additions or deletions to other countryside designations fulfilling a similar role to those of Green Belt as appropriate and notes that opportunities for contributing to the Green Network proposals should also be identified in these areas.<sup>2</sup>

## **3 SESPLAN EXAMINATION**

- 3.1 The SESplan Examination Report considered representations that sought to alter the SESplan wording on Green Belts and Other Countryside Designations. The Reporter accepted that whilst a countryside designation like Countryside Around Towns does not have the same statutory status as green belt it was appropriate for SESplan to address such a designation through policy and that the way in which SESplan deals with these countryside designations was also appropriate. The Reporter made no changes to paragraph 132 of SESplan or to Policy 13 Other Countryside Designations.

## **4 East Lothian Local Development Plan Main Issues Report - Justification for Countryside Around Towns policy**

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<sup>2</sup> SESplan Strategic Development Plan June 2013 Paragraphs 128 – 132 and Policy 13

4.1 East Lothian is a very attractive part of Scotland with distinctive landscapes, topography and townscapes. The overall environmental quality of its built and natural environment is a significant consideration when seeking land for new development. Communities rate where they live highly and value the character and identity of their towns and villages. The landscape setting of towns and villages often adds much to their character and identity.

4.2 At a time when the demand for development is increasing, East Lothian's special character is under pressure. The Proposed Local Development Plan identifies those parts of East Lothian that are of important landscape character through a range of designations such as Special Landscape Areas, Conservation Areas, Green Belt and Countryside Around Towns. These have helped to formulate the spatial strategy.

4.3 Scottish Natural Heritage and Historic Scotland produced Guidance on Local Landscape Designations in 2006<sup>3</sup>. This offers advice on assessing and identifying local landscape designations. Section 2.8 states that:

Local landscape designations can be particularly useful in the following circumstances to:

- 1) safeguard important landscapes and landscape features which are particularly valued and may have limited capacity for change;
- 2) promote understanding and awareness of the distinctive character and special qualities of the landscapes of a local authority area;
- 3) promote some of the most important outdoor settings for recreation and tourism within a local authority area; and
- 4) contribute to wider policies for guiding urban expansion, by specifically identifying and safeguarding areas of landscape importance within or close to existing settlements

4.4 A full landscape character assessment to identify Special Landscape Areas for the first three objectives has been carried out by the Council and 32 Special Landscape Areas proposed in the LDP. The Countryside Around Towns policy addresses the 4<sup>th</sup> objective. There is some overlap of the Special Landscape Areas and Countryside Around Towns designations which is necessary due to the differing objectives of the policies.

4.5 Countryside Around Towns is a new policy designation in East Lothian and has been established to give protection to the most sensitive parts of the undeveloped landscape around East Lothian's settlements. These are the areas that are important to maintaining the setting and character of settlements in the local area. While in principle this planning policy is applicable to all defined settlements in East Lothian it has only been applied where in the Council's view it is required and can be justified; there are therefore settlements that either are not under specific development pressures, where the landscape is of an equal character around the settlement or where potential expansion was not seen to impact detrimentally of the landscape setting such that would justify a Countryside Around Towns designation.

4.6 There are a number of areas of East Lothian beyond the designated Green Belt which have been the subject of development pressure for many years but which would be better left open or undeveloped because of their importance to the landscape character of the local area around the settlement. Whilst these areas are important to the setting and identity of settlements and can also provide a setting to other landscape features a Green Belt

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<sup>3</sup> Guidance on Local Landscape Designations; Scottish Natural Heritage Historic Scotland 2006

designation would not be appropriate because the green belt cannot reasonable be extended into these areas or they are some distance from the green belt. Green Belt policy applies to the western part of East Lothian around Edinburgh. Countryside Around Towns provides a similar function to Green Belt planning policy and is applied to protect particularly sensitive landscape around towns. SESplan does not allow for additional Green Belts but does allow a local development plan to review other countryside designations that fulfil a similar function. It is the Council's view that a Countryside Around Towns policy is one such policy and one that is appropriate for East Lothian at a time when there is increasing development pressure on communities.

4.7 Countryside Around Town designation was proposed in the Main Issues Report as an integral part of the preferred spatial strategy. In planning for major housing development in East Lothian that will have an acknowledged effect on the landscape character of affected settlements and the overall appearance of the county, it was considered important to mitigate against this through the development of an enhanced green network and the protection from large scale development of areas of land that are important to the landscape setting of key settlements. SESplan Policy 7 allows for greenfield housing development proposals to be allocated in a local development plan or granted permission to maintain a five year effective housing land supply **subject to the development being in keeping with the character of the settlement and local area**. The Countryside Around Towns policy identifies those areas of land on the edges of settlements that would, if developed, be detrimental to the landscape character and setting of the settlement and local area thus helping to steer development required in the circumstances where Policy 7 applies to more appropriate locations.

4.8 Countryside Around Towns designation is applied to meet the following objectives:

- to conserve the landscape setting, character or identity of the particular settlement and /or
- to prevent the coalescence of settlements and/or
- where it can provide opportunity for green network and recreation purposes

4.9 Countryside Around Towns policy can be applied in association with other policies in the local development plan, in particular with Policy DC1 Rural Diversification; Policy DC9 Special Landscape Areas; Policy CH2 Conservation Areas. Each policy has its own requirements that are applicable to the area to which they are applied. Within an area designated as a Special Landscape Area development must not harm its character as specified in its individual statement of significance. In situations where both an SLA and a Countryside Around Towns is applied any proposed development must therefore be assessed against the SLA Statement of Importance and against Policy DC8: Countryside Around Towns the latter specifying where new development will be supported in principle; if required for the green network, for community use, for rural business, tourism or leisure or essential infrastructure that needs that location. New development permitted in principle must also be of a scale, size and form that does not harm the objectives for the Countryside Around Towns designation in that particular location, as described in the statements justifying designation at paragraph 5.4 below. Countryside Around Towns designation does not therefore protect the designated area entirely from development, instead it permits appropriate forms of development that would not harm the landscape setting of the settlement or contribute to coalescence with another settlement. The scale of development proposed is an appropriate consideration in respect of residential development; the policy is intended to allow



development appropriate to the countryside as specified in Policies DC1, DC2, DC3. Extensions to existing buildings will also be acceptable subject to satisfying the terms of Policy DP5: Extensions and Alterations to Existing buildings.

4.10 Within an area designated as Countryside Around Towns new development is supported where it is required to implement part of the green network strategy, an example might be the provision of land for a footpath or cycleway; where it is required for community uses, an example might be the provision of land for allotments or for recreational use; where it is required for rural business, tourism or leisure related use, an example might be an extension to a caravan park or the development of a tourist accommodation facility; where it is essential infrastructure for which there is no alternative appropriate location and that therefore has to be located within that area, an example might be the provision of a waste water treatment works where there is an operational requirement for the location. New areas of housing, employment or other large scale development are not permitted within the Countryside Around Towns designation.

#### Methodology

4.11 To determine the areas of East Lothian appropriate for Countryside Around Towns policy an analysis was undertaken by Council Planners with input from Council Landscape Architects of countryside around settlements to determine:

- i. the East Lothian settlements that have an important and attractive countryside setting and that are under development pressure
- ii. the East Lothian settlements whose character and identity would be threatened by coalescence through new development
- iii. the East Lothian settlements that have green network or recreational development opportunities.

4.12 Towns and villages that were assessed and met these criteria included Prestonpans, Tranent, Cockenzie/Port Seton, Longniddry, Macmerry, Ormiston, Haddington, Aberlady, Gullane, Dirleton, North Berwick, East Linton, Dunbar/Belhaven, West Barns. Other settlements in East Lothian are either located in the Green Belt, (which is not applicable to Countryside Around Towns designation), have an equality of landscape setting or are not under significant development pressure.

4.13 The setting of each town was then assessed to determine where in the future each settlement could potentially grow with minimum impact on its landscape setting which consequently determine where an extension of its urban area would adversely affect its landscape character and setting. Countryside Around Towns designation was determined in accordance with the following criteria:

- Would large areas of new development, either for employment or residential use, potentially adversely impact the views on approach to a settlement or views from the settlement?
- Are there areas where coalescence would potentially harm the individual character and identity of settlements?
- Are there particular landscape features, or areas of particular landscape character, that could be used to determine the appropriate extent and boundaries of any designated Countryside Around Towns area?
- Is there scope for future green network and recreation development?

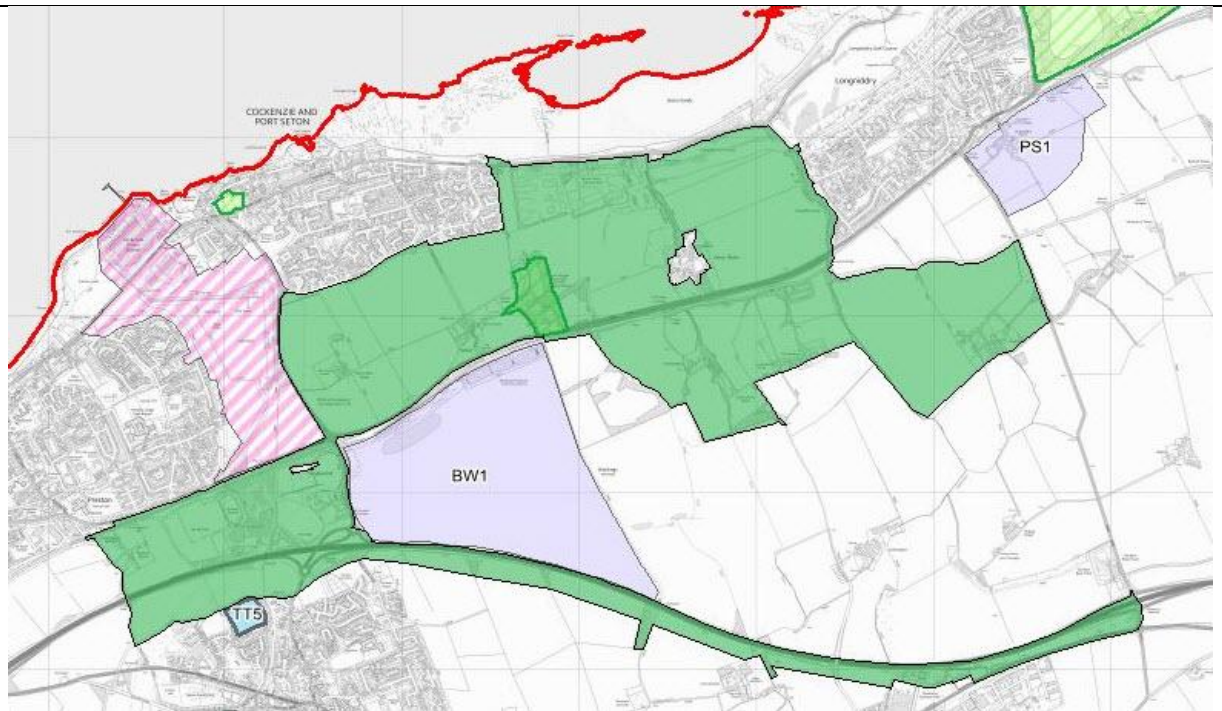
4.14 Countryside Around Towns designation was proposed in the Main Issues Report as an integral part of the preferred spatial strategy. Responses to the MIR in respect of CAT were assessed and the CAT areas reviewed and revised where appropriate.

4.15 These designated areas are described in the statements below along with the justification for each inclusion. The key for all the maps is below:

**Key to Maps:**



## Tranent / Prestonpans / Cockenzie Port Seton / Longniddry Countryside Around Towns area



### Justification

This area extends from the eastern edge of the Green Belt between Prestonpans and Tranent to include all land between Prestonpans and Tranent and land between the allocated Blindwells site and Cockenzie/Port Seton and extending east to the western edge of Longniddry. To the south of the A198 it includes land around the St Germain's, Chesterhall, Cantyhall and Southfield area. North east of Tranent it includes land alongside the A1 between the proposed Blindwells settlement and land east of Tranent.

When Blindwells is developed the land between it and the neighbouring towns of Cockenzie/Port Seton to the north and Tranent to the southwest becomes more important to remain undeveloped to retain a distinct identity for each town and to provide green space preventing potential coalescence of the settlements and urban sprawl. The countryside landscape setting of Tranent, Prestonpans, Cockenzie/Port Seton and Longniddry should therefore be protected between Tranent and Prestonpans; between Cockenzie/Port Seton and Blindwells; and between Longniddry and Blindwells.

Land between Tranent and Prestonpans – despite containing transport routes, infrastructure and community facilities as well as historic and other buildings this area is generally open with countryside, the sports areas and the viewpoint pyramid, visually representing the area's mining heritage around Meadowmill, predominating. The two large towns of Prestonpans and Tranent are visually separated by this area and it is important that this continues to be kept clear of built development to continue to define the individual character and landscape setting of the two towns. This land adjoins and forms a natural continuation of the designated Edinburgh Green Belt to the west.

Land between Cockenzie/Port Seton and Blindwells – this broad area of agricultural countryside is interspersed with farms, a number of historic buildings and designed landscapes. Seton Mains,

which is a significant group of predominantly houses within this area is specifically excluded from the designated area as it is defined as a settlement in its own right through the application of Policy RCA1: Residential Character and Amenity. This area of countryside will become more important in the wider landscape as Blindwells develops. It provides an area of countryside between Cockenzie/Port Seton and Blindwells that, together with the land between Prestonpans and Tranent, clearly defines the extent of each of these coastal towns, retaining their character and identity. Its width north to south between Cockenzie/Port Seton and Blindwells is similar to the width of the land between Tranent and Prestonpans and thereby retains an appropriately sized, significant separation in the form of an effective belt of countryside that extends west to east between these sizeable settlements (existing and planned). It also includes the landscape setting for the nationally significant Garden and Designed Landscape of Seton House (Palace).

Land between Longniddry, Seton Mains and Blindwells - This broad band of agricultural land provides a clear landscape setting for Longniddry to the west and southwest particularly in views on the approach from the west along the A198 and the East Coast Main Line and B6363 to the south. The retention of this undeveloped land will become more important if Blindwells develops further to the east to ensure separation between the settlements of Longniddry and Blindwells and Seton Mains.

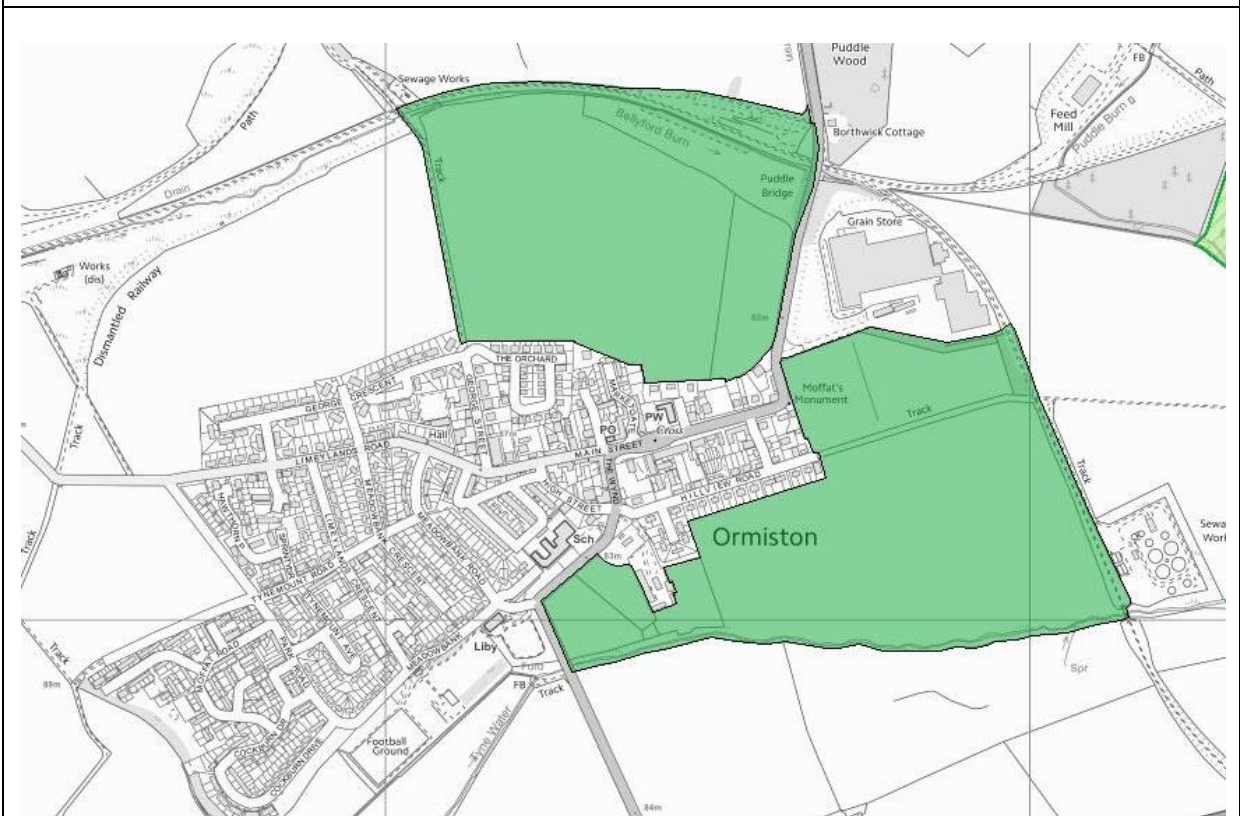
The strip of land between Port Seton and the caravan park marks the definitive edge of Port Seton as well as continuing the historic visual link to the sea that forms part of the setting of the castle.

Land along the A1 to the south of Blindwells and its safeguarded expansion area – this narrow strip of land extends from the A1 Bankton interchange to its Gladsmuir interchange and offers green network and recreation opportunities as well as helping to ensure that Blindwells is contained in its wider landscape setting by strengthening and widening the visual and physical barrier offered by the A1 corridor and preventing coalescence with Macmerry at its eastern end.

The Countryside Around Towns policy for the areas of land described above contributes to the following objectives:

1. **Protection of the landscape setting of settlements – development on these sites would harm the landscape setting of nearby settlements**
2. **Prevention of coalescence of settlements to retain the distinctive identities of separate communities** - between Tranent and Prestonpans; between Prestonpans and Blindwells; between Cockenzie/Port Seton and Blindwells; between Longniddry and Blindwells and south of Blindwells.
3. **Provision of green networks and recreation – potential for better integration and provision of green networks for wildlife and people** - this provides a strategic link to the Green Belt by continuing the adjoining Green Belt designation. Together the two designations form a significant area of open land, through which major transport links pass, allowing clear views of distinctive settlements. Joining together such land is good practice from an environmental viewpoint as it creates connected green areas through which wildlife can roam and enhances biodiversity. They also permit the creation of green network path links, access to open countryside for residents of settlements which can improve people's health and well-being.

## Ormiston Countryside Around Towns Area



### Justification

Ormiston developed as a planned town laid out in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century; this forms the distinctive eastern part of the village and its conservation area. The distinctiveness of the oldest part of the village lies in its clarity of form, in particular the approach through countryside and arrival at the two right angled bends that turn into the historic core. Open farmland to the north of the village provides the landscape setting for the oldest parts of the village, glimpsed as a varied townscape integrating with its countryside setting on the approach to the village from the B6371 to the north. Development to the north of the village would be visually detrimental to the landscape setting and character of the historic core of the village.

Land to east of Main Street, the former glebe field, is undeveloped and contributes to the setting of the historic planned village because of its undeveloped nature and the views out to the open countryside from Main Street. Development to the east of the village would be visually detrimental to the landscape setting and character of the historic core of the village.

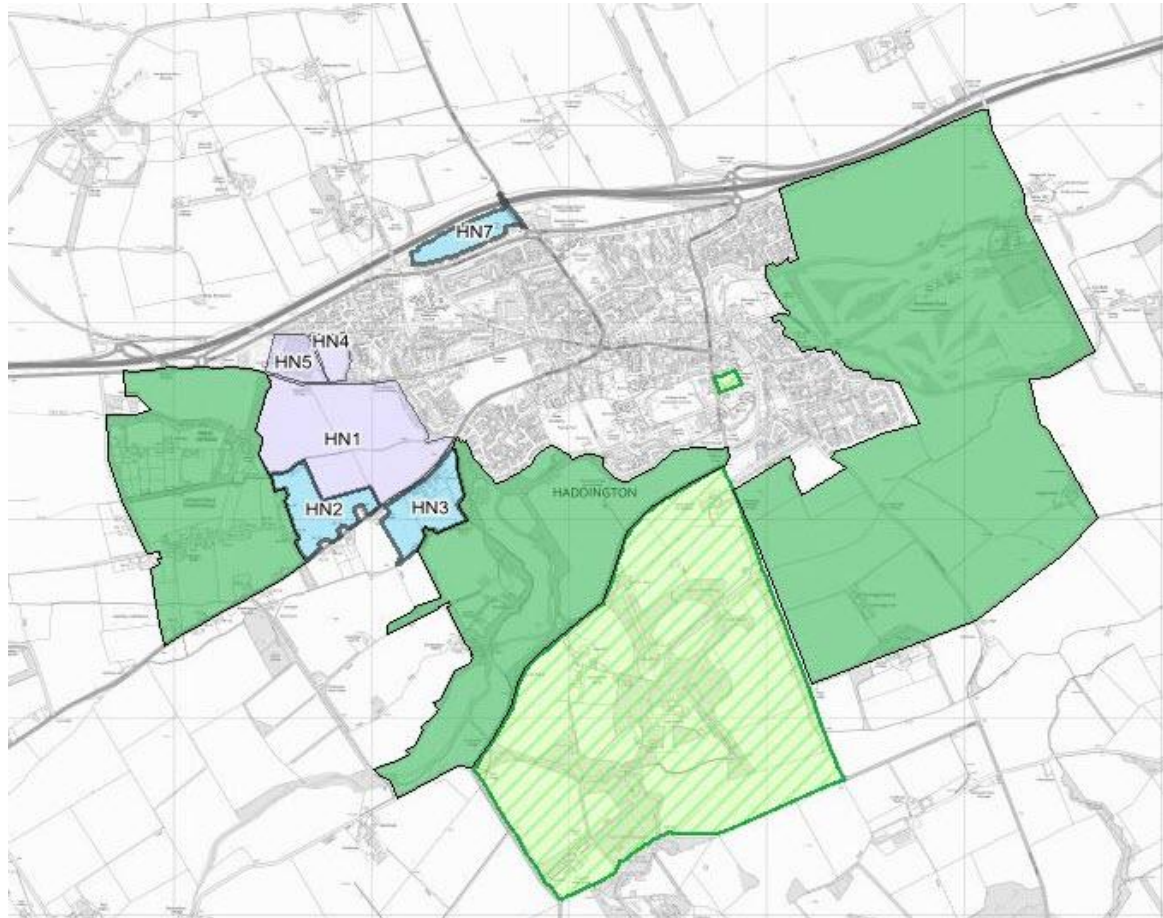
Land to the south of Ormiston, adjoining the glebe field and extending to the Tyne Water forms a prominent and visible part of the setting of the Ormiston Conservation Area when viewed from the A6093 and B6371 to the south. It provides an attractive setting and approach to Ormiston from the south that should be retained as countryside. Development to the south of the village would be visually detrimental to the landscape setting and character of the historic core of the village.

The Countryside Around Towns policy at Ormiston contributes to the following objectives:

- **Protection of the landscape setting of settlements – development on these sites would harm the landscape setting of the settlement**



## Haddington Countryside Around Towns area



### Justification

Haddington was established along the River Tyne and is low lying within a bowl landform, partly hidden from the north by the Garleton Hills and with rising land to the north, west and south. The town has grown east to west, constrained by the higher land to the north and by the river and rising land to the south. The A1 trunk road runs to the north of the town providing a natural boundary feature and physical separation between Haddington and the wider countryside to the north.

Its wider landscape setting includes the nationally significant Lennoxlove Garden and Designed Landscape and locally significant designed estate landscapes at Amisfield to the east and Alderston to the north and the regionally significant designed estate landscape at Clerkington to south of the town.

The Countryside around Towns designation is proposed to apply to parts of the east, west and south sides of Haddington where development would detrimentally impact on the landscape character and setting of the town.

To the west of the town the countryside west of Letham Mains has a distinctive landscape character of long established smallholdings, most of which comprise an original house, workshop and agricultural field. These are evenly spaced across the open countryside and served by a series of local roads. It is significant as one of the largest areas of smallholdings in East Lothian. Infill development here would result in the loss of this distinctive landscape settlement pattern and be visually detrimental to the entrance to Haddington at its western entrance along the A6093.

The landscape setting of the west side of Haddington also includes distinctive tree belts that line the long drive to Letham House connecting to other tree belts in the area providing a strong natural edge enclosure to the north west approach to Haddington. Development land is allocated at Letham Mains on the east side of the tree belt, within this physical enclosure of the settlement. Development on the west side would extend outwith the natural settlement boundary, visibly encroaching on open countryside adversely affecting the wider landscape setting of the town.

To the southwest, Clerkington Estate is an old estate and historic designed landscape of regional significance with a mature treed setting, partly included in the Haddington Conservation Area. Together with the rising land between the River Tyne and the B6368 (also included in the conservation area and forming much of the character of riverside walks), these areas form an attractive south-westerly approach and countryside setting for the town beyond which lies the nationally significant designed landscape of Lennoxlove Estate. Development here would detrimentally impact on views in and out of the town and its wider landscape setting.

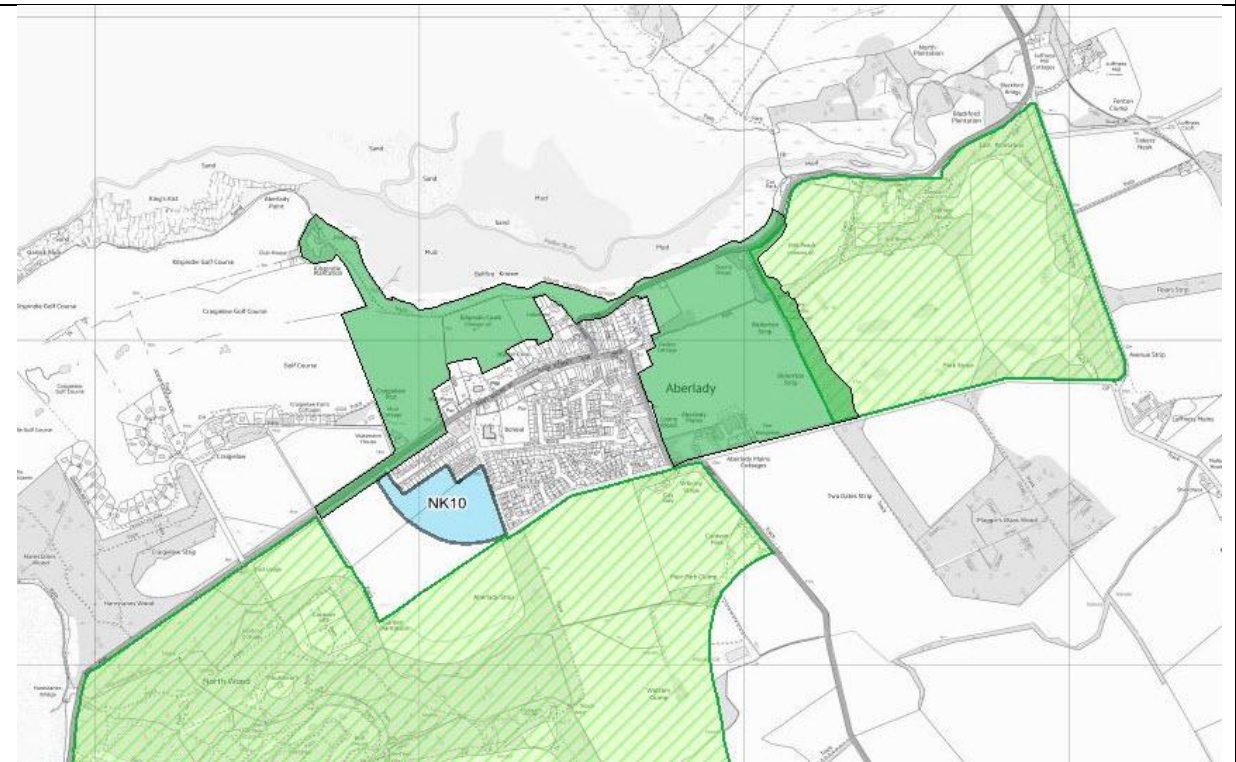
To the southeast of Haddington, the landscape rises to a natural ridge line to the southeast of the town at Briery Bank. Development further southeast would extend built development beyond its natural landform containment of the bowl enclosure of the current settlement. This would greatly increase visibility of the town in views from the south and detrimentally impact on the landscape character and wider countryside setting of the settlement.

To the east the designed landscape of Amisfield, included in the town's Conservation Area, is prominent in views from the A1 and A199 to the northeast where the rising land with parkland and mature trees contrasts with the flat open farmed land in the foreground. Development here would have a detrimental visual impact on views in and out of the town and on its wider landscape setting.

The Countryside Around Towns policy at Haddington contributes to the following objectives:

- **Protection of the landscape setting of settlements – development on these sites would harm the landscape setting of the settlement**
- **Provision of green networks and recreation – potential for better integration and provision of green networks for wildlife and people**

## Aberlady Countryside Around Towns area



### Justification

Aberlady is a small, historic coastal village with an important heritage as the original port for Haddington (at Kilspindie). Its coastal north side is important to the understanding of its character and identity with the remains of early structures and a northern built up edge that reflects the fingers of development extending to the high water mark. The northern seaward setting of Aberlady is therefore an integral part of its landscape setting and should not be developed.

To the east the extensive tree belts of the Bickerton Strip form the western edge of the highly scenic Luffness inventory Garden and Designed Landscape. Together with the open farmland to their west up to the village edge they provide an established countryside edge and context to the village and a rural setting for the listed farm buildings at Aberlady Mains that is worthy of protection.

Development here would detrimentally impact on the landscape character and setting of the east side of this historic settlement and on views of the village from the A198 coast road and minor road to the south of Luffness.

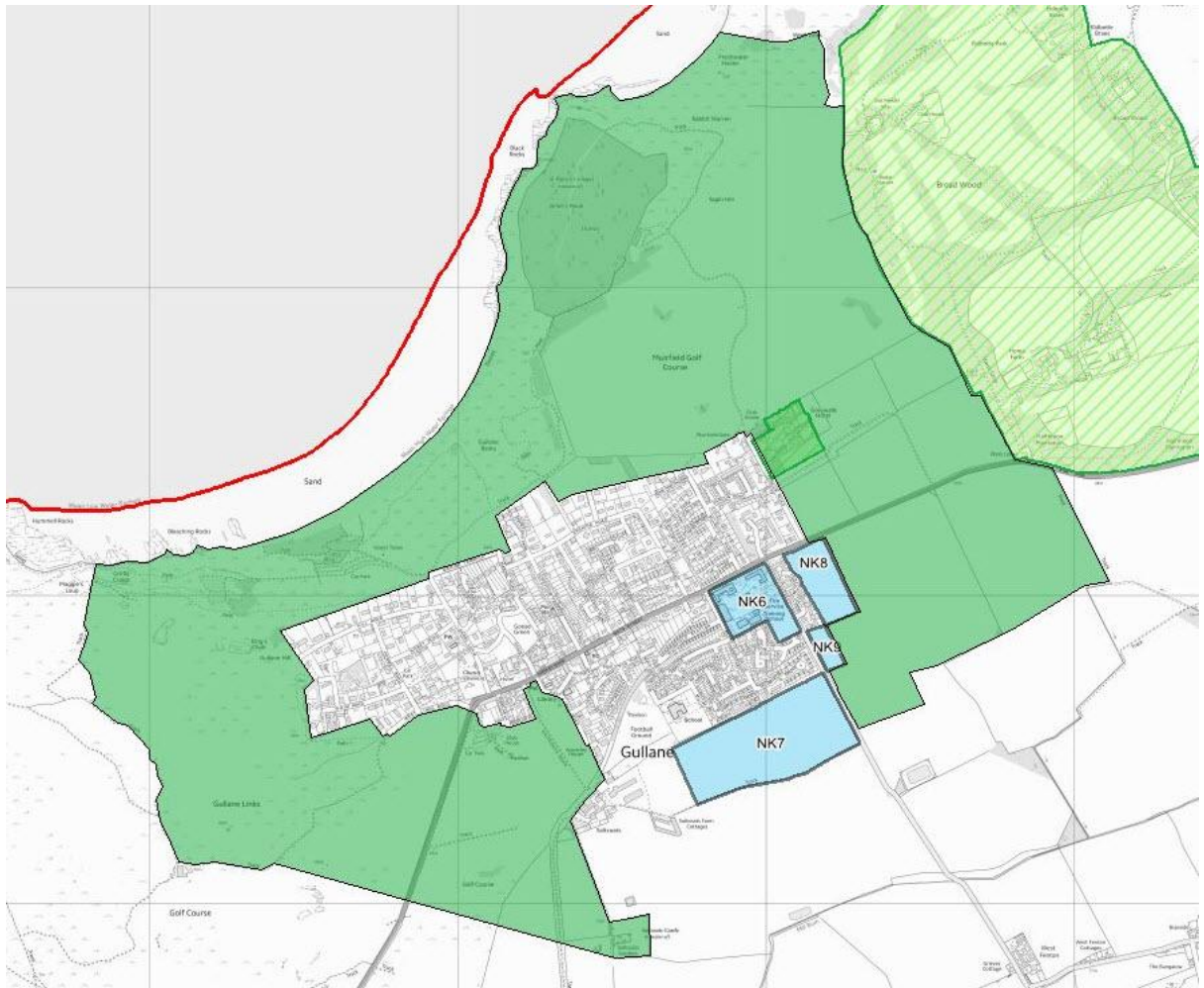
To the west of Aberlady the avenue of trees on the western approach to the village forms an important gateway feature of the landscape setting of the village and should be retained.

The Countryside Around Towns policy at Aberlady contributes to the following objectives:

- **Protection of the landscape setting of settlements – development on these sites would harm the landscape setting of the settlement.**



## Gullane Countryside Around Towns area



### Justification

The landscape character of Gullane is dominated by the slopes of the hill on the west side of the village with golf course on its western, northern and southern slopes and built development on its eastern slopes within the Gullane Conservation Area. The approach to Gullane from the west along the A198 affords open scenic views across the links golf courses towards the historic core of Gullane set on and to the east of the lower slopes of the hillside. Development that interrupts these views and urbanises this approach to Gullane would adversely affect this setting.

The landscape to the east of the village is generally flatter with long distance views towards the Garleton and Lammermuir Hills to the south. Early 20<sup>th</sup> century designed landscape at Muirfield/Greywalls by Edward Lutyens and Gertrude Jekyll deliberately made use of the local topography designing Greywalls on a ridge that afforded seascape views to the north and picturesque pastoral countryside views to the south. The panoramic sea views with the coastal links and dunes to the north, contrast with the pastoral landscape to the south, where open views across to the Garleton Hills and Lammermuirs were intentionally framed and form the principal vistas from the gardens which should continue to be uninterrupted by built development as intended by Lutyens and Jekyll.

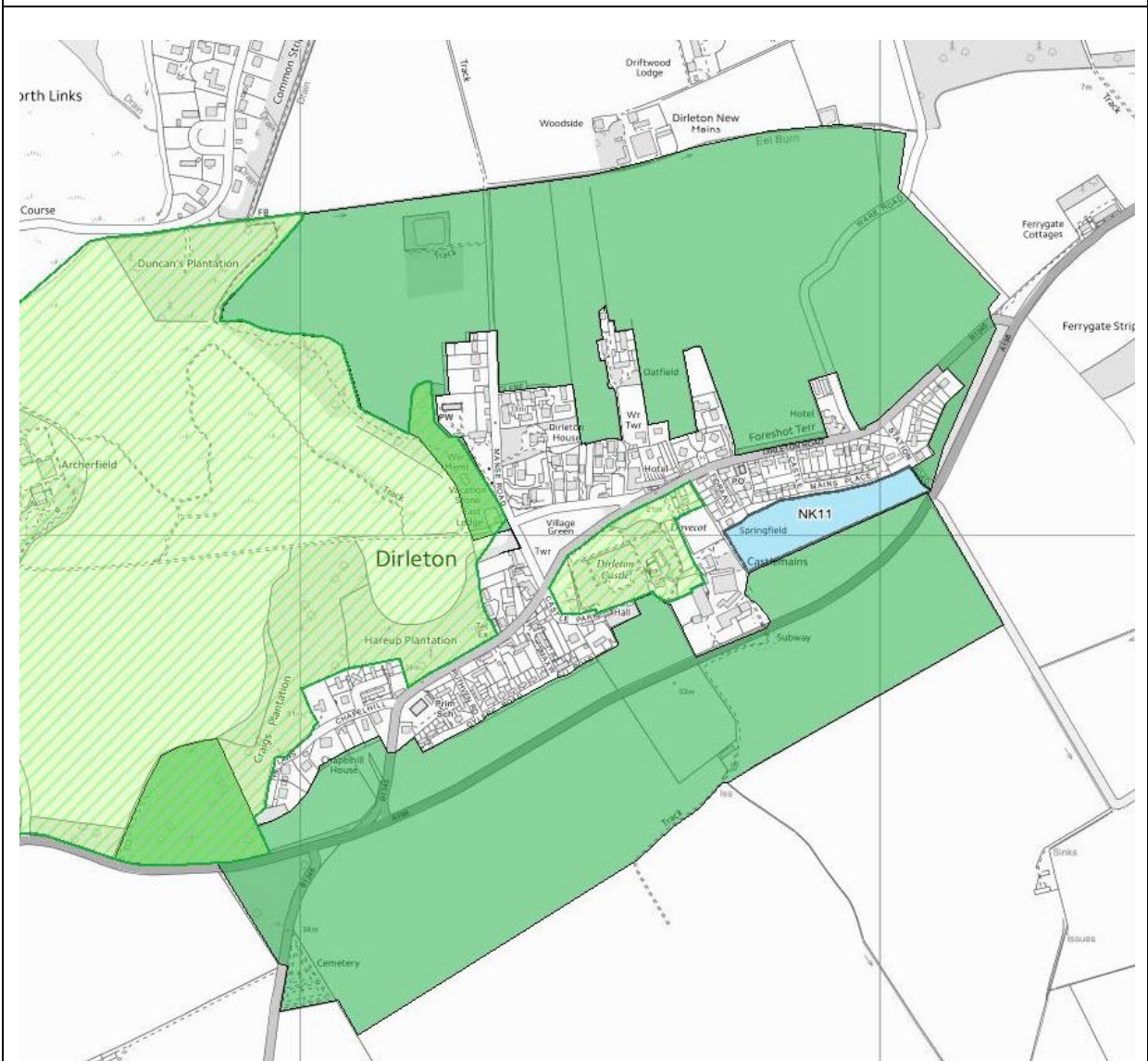
The northern and western boundary of the Countryside Around Towns area extends to the high

water mark and includes Gullane bents and the high ground at Gullane Hill. The southern boundary defined to the east by a track running east west in line with the proposed southern extension to the village to the west. The Countryside Around Towns area extends to the western boundary woodland at Archerfield Garden and Designed Landscape creating a strong boundary feature and retaining open views to Gullane on its eastern approach along the A198.

The Countryside Around Towns policy at Gullane contributes to the following objectives:

- **Protection of the landscape setting of settlements – development on these sites would harm the landscape setting of the settlement**
- **Provision of green networks and recreation – potential for better integration and provision of green networks for wildlife and people**

## Dirleton Countryside Around Towns area



### Justification

Dirleton is a conservation village and includes the landscape setting of the village within its designated conservation area. Dominated by its castle situated on a knoll of high land, the rest of the village is generally flat rising only to the west. Trees to the west associated with the Archerfield Garden and Designed Landscape form the western boundary between the west edge of Dirleton village and the links. Its pattern of development has resulted in fingers of development extending northwards into the flat countryside integrating the village, including its larger landmark buildings to the north, with its surrounding countryside. Development on land to the north would detrimentally impact on the countryside setting and character of the village.

The A198 bypasses the village to the south with small fields between the bypass and the built up urban edge and southern aspect of the castle. This is an important feature of the open southern aspect of the village that allows views of the built up edge of the village and the landmark castle. Tree groups around the village help it to integrate into the countryside. Land for expansion of Dirleton is proposed at Castlemains Place, retaining a similarly sized width of field between the bypass and the new urban edge as there is to the south of Gylers Road. Any further development to

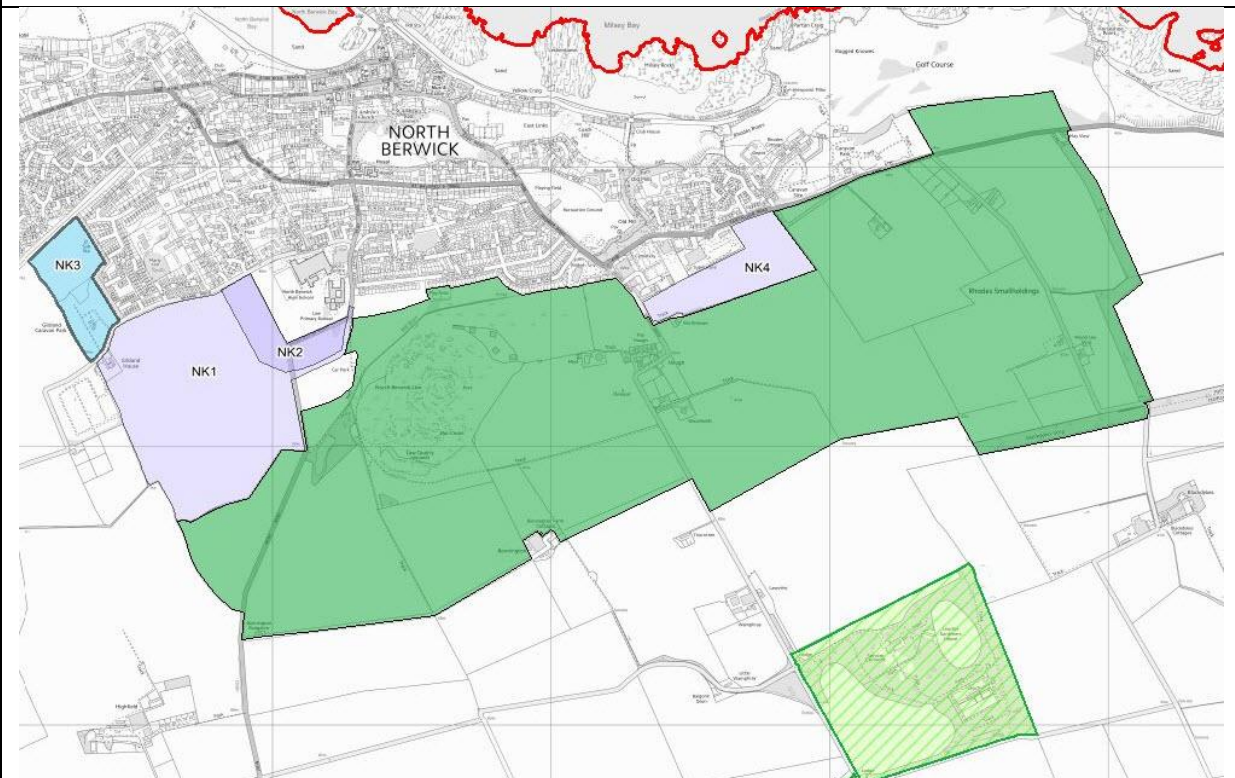
the south, east and west of the castle would detrimentally impact on its open countryside setting and interrupt views of the castle from the A198 coastal tourist route.

The Countryside Around Towns policy at Dirleton contributes to the following objectives:

- **Protection of the landscape setting of settlements – development on these sites would harm the landscape setting of the settlement.**



## North Berwick Countryside Around Towns area



### Justification

The landscape to the south of North Berwick is dominated by the major landscape feature of North Berwick Law, a cone shaped volcanic plug that rises suddenly and steeply from the surrounding fields, its ruggedness contrasting with the cultivated farmland below, with a glaciated crag and tail feature forming a long low sloping ridge on its east side.

Built development within the town has developed to the south until it meets marshy ground at the foot of the Law. Land between the B1347 and the Heugh Road that encompasses the extent of the Law is included for its distinctive landscape setting for North Berwick and for its potential for green network links between the town and the countryside. This area has longer term potential for a public recreational area to serve the town and to preserve views of the area on the approaches to North Berwick from the south.

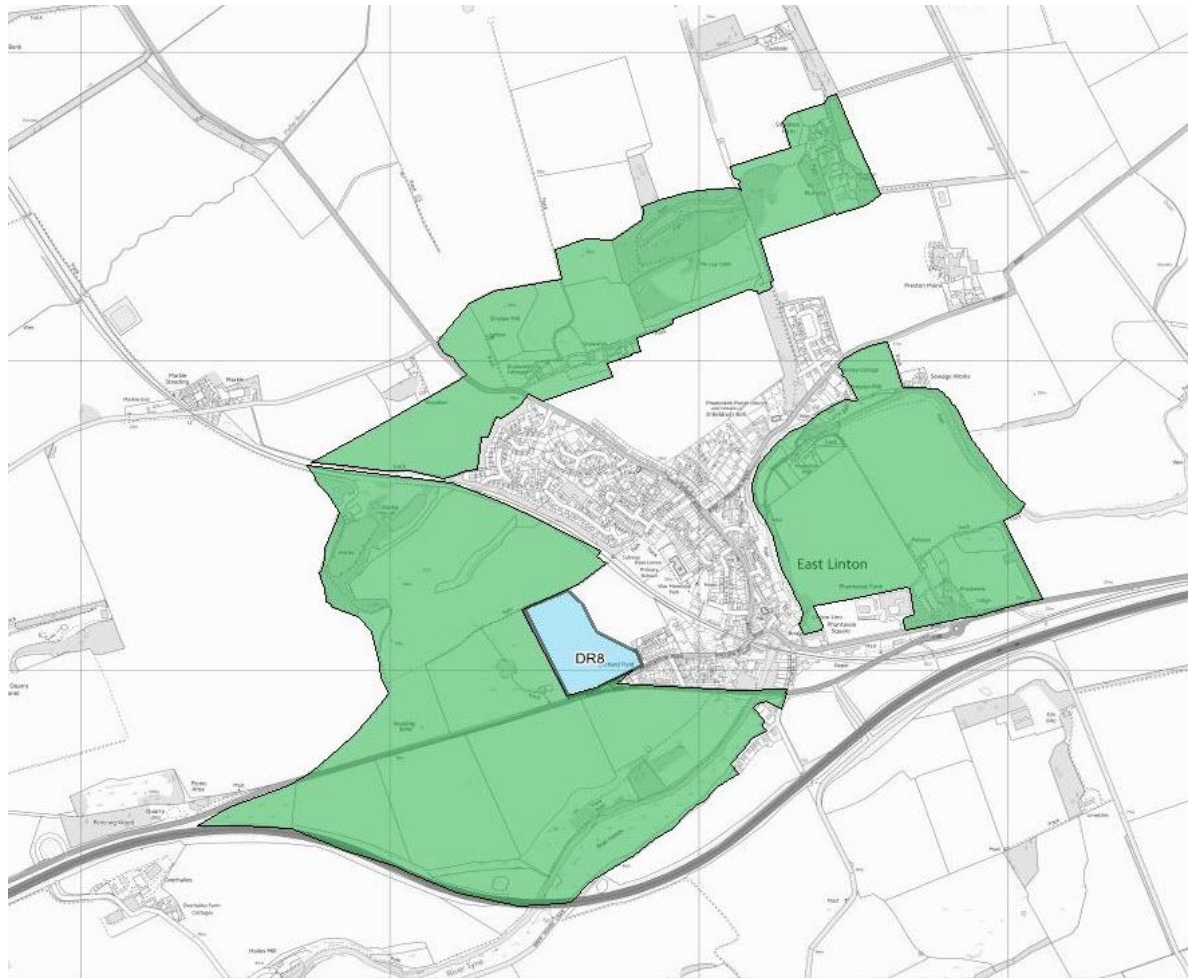
The eastern approach to North Berwick includes the expansive coastal countryside views of the Bass Rock and North Berwick Law and is bounded by the tree belt to the east of Rhodes Small Holding that forms a strong visual and physical boundary feature.

These areas form the distinctive landscape setting of the town and should be protected from visually harmful development that would detrimentally impact on these views or the countryside setting of the town and landscape setting and character of the Law.

The Countryside Around Towns policy at North Berwick contributes to the following objectives:

- **Protection of the landscape setting of settlements – development on these sites would harm the landscape setting of the settlement**
- **Provision of green networks and recreation – potential for better integration and provision of green networks for wildlife and people**

## East Linton Countryside Around Towns area



### Justification

The village of East Linton was established beside the River Tyne, by the fast moving waters of the Linn Rocks, at a low lying and sheltered location. Land on the edge of the village rises to the north, west and south. East Linton can be viewed in its low lying setting from the B1377 on the north approach to East Linton, from the A199 and Pencaig Hill to the west and from the Traprain road to the south. The extensive view from the eastern slopes of Pencaig Hill is of the village as part of a wider landscape character nestled in a bowl in the landscape in the foreground with panoramic views over Belhaven Bay beyond. A notable landmark in this view is the old church tower with its distinctive helm roof.

Village expansion has reached the lower slopes of the high land to its north west, west and south with the flat floodplain of the river lying to the east. This provides the village with a well defined landscape setting and character that would be adversely affected by further encroachment on to higher land. Its more recent housing developments at Dunder Road and Andrew Meikle Grove have been limited in the extent to which they extend on to higher land to retain the low-lying landscape setting of the village. With careful positioning and design of buildings land proposed for development as PROP DR8: Pencaig Hill, East Linton should not adversely affect the panoramic views over the village towards the Tyne estuary at Belhaven Bay and the low lying setting of the

village from its approach down Pencraig Hill.

Land to the south and west rises steeply from the river valley of the Tyne. These slopes are a prominent part of the landscape setting of the village. To the north lies a designed landscape at Smeaton on high ground above the village with prominent areas and groups of trees forming the backdrop to the village punctuated by vernacular buildings at Drylawhill. Large areas of development on the higher ground around the village would extend out of the natural bowl containment of the landscape form. Increasing the visual prominence of the village in its wider landscape setting. This would be detrimental to the existing setting of the village and wider landscape character of the area.

Land to the east of the village, some of which lies within the flood plain of the River Tyne, contains tree belts and a riverside landscape that provides an attractive landscape setting for the village allowing the buildings of the village centre on a ridge of higher ground on the west side of the river to be seen rising up from the riverside. Development in the foreground on the flat land part of which is in the flood plain would be detrimental to the landscape character and harm this setting.

The Countryside Around Towns policy at East Linton contributes to the following objectives:

- **Protection of the landscape setting of settlements – development on these sites would harm the landscape setting of the settlement.**
- **Provision of green networks and recreation – potential for better integration and provision of green networks for wildlife and people**

## West Barns / Belhaven Countryside Around Towns area



### Justification

Belhaven and West Barns are distinct settlements separated by open land consisting of recreational facilities of the bowling green, boating pond and caravan site to the north of the A199 and the raised wooded land of Rosebank House to the south of the A199.

The area of undeveloped land between Belhaven and West Barns has narrowed following the grant of planning permission on appeal (12/00533/PMM) for residential development on part of the field to the west of Beveridge Row at Belhaven. The remaining land between West Barns and Belhaven is designated as a CAT area to avoid the coalescence of the two villages and to maintain their different character and identity by ensuring a physical and visual separation between them. The area extends to the high water mark to the north and to the boundary of the Main Coast Rail Line to the south.

The Countryside Around Towns policy at West Barns/Belhaven contributes in particular to the following objectives:

- **Protection of the landscape setting of settlements – development on these sites would harm the landscape setting of nearby settlements**
- **Prevention of coalescence of settlements to retain the distinctive identities of separate communities**
- **Provision of green networks and recreation – potential for better integration and provision of green networks for wildlife and people**



## 5 The Main Issues Report Consultation Responses in summary

5.1 The Main Issues Report suggested a preferred and reasonable alternative approach to Countryside Around Towns designations as shown in Table 10 from the Main Issues Report reproduced below.

<p><b>Preferred Approach</b></p>	<p><b>Introduce Countryside Around Town designations:</b> Such designations could be promoted where the setting and identity of settlements or landscape features not in the Green Belt merit protection from significant built development. A new policy would be introduced to define the types of development which should be resisted in such areas unless there are exceptional circumstances, such as for essential infrastructure, or for community uses which would not compromise the setting of the settlement or landscape feature, or where a proposed development would complement the feature to which the designation relates, or where the proposal would effect landscape improvement, including contributing towards CSGN objectives. This approach could be followed including in the following locations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The land beyond the Green Belt between Tranent/ Macmerry/Prestonpans/ Cockenzie / Port Seton, Longniddry, Blindwells, and St Germain's;</li> <li>• Around North Berwick Law, between it and the planned new southern edge of the town;</li> <li>• To the south, west and east of Haddington;</li> <li>• Between Dunbar and West Barns;</li> <li>• Villages including Ormiston, Aberlady, Gullane, Dirleton and East Linton.</li> </ul> <p>Such a designation would imply greater permanence to the presumption against built development in those locations than might the application of a countryside designation. Potential Countryside Around Town policy areas are shown at Appendix 5.</p>
<p><b>Reasonable Alternative</b></p>	<p><b>Do not introduce Countryside Around Town designations.</b></p>

5.2 The summarised key messages from the Main Issues Report Consultation on Countryside Around Towns by respondent type were:

**Key agencies:** Scottish Government and Historic Scotland recognised the role of a Countryside Around Towns policy in protecting local landscapes that should work with Special Landscapes Area designations, but needs explanation of the relationship between them.

**National Interest Groups:** The National Trust for Scotland and Scottish Wildlife Trust supported a Countryside Around Towns policy and Homes for Scotland saw it as unnecessary. The Architectural Heritage Society for Scotland point out that the landscape setting of its settlements is central to the character of East Lothian.

All the **Community Councils and Area Partnerships** who responded supported a Countryside Around Towns policy to protect the character and identity of their local towns and villages and prevent coalescence. Of the other local interest groups, the Haddington and District Amenity Society suggested that landscape is crucial to the setting of the area and is the key to protecting the character of East Lothian.

The vast majority of **local residents and members of the public** supported a Countryside Around Towns policy which they saw as protecting the countryside settings, character and identity of towns and villages and providing green space opportunities.

The majority of **developers, landowners and agents** who expressed a view were opposed to the introduction of a Countryside Around Towns policy which was seen as unnecessary, does not plan for the longer term, is insufficiently justified, and seen as a barrier to maintaining an effective 5 year housing land supply.

- 5.3 Responses received to the Main Issues Report in respect of Countryside Around Towns are summarised in Table 2. The Main Issues Report preferred approach was to introduce Countryside Around Towns designations and the reasonable alternative was not to introduce Countryside Around Towns designations.

**Table 2: Summarised Main Issues Report Responses**

**Landowners and Agents:**

<b>Comment or Issue raised in connection with Countryside Around Towns policy</b>	<b>East Lothian Council Response</b>
There is no need for an additional landscape protection policy which creates a confused policy landscape.	Countryside Around Towns is a new landscape protection policy designed to protect the best parts of the landscape setting of East Lothian settlements under pressure from development or to prevent coalescence of settlements. It plays a part in the overall spatial strategy of the local development plan. Each policy applicable to land around as settlement has its own purpose and can be justified.
Dirleton: Foreshot Terrace should be excluded from Countryside Around Towns as it is a Main Issues Report Reasonable Alternative housing site	This site was a reasonable alternative site for housing development in the Main Issues Report. However the preferred site has been allocated for residential development and this site is not supported. As the site does contribute to the landscape setting of the north side of Dirleton it has been included in the Countryside Around Towns area.
Countryside Around Towns	Countryside Around Towns is not a land supply policy. Sufficient

restricts land supply.	land is allocated to meet East Lothian's housing requirements. Countryside Around Towns seeks to protect the landscape setting and character of East Lothian settlements.
Need more supporting evidence for each area designated	This has been provided in this Technical Note.
May prevent high quality small scale development in the countryside	The Countryside Around Towns policy applies to only a small part of the East Lothian countryside. It does not permit new build housing development but would permit the conversion of rural buildings such as a disused farm steading. Other small scale development required for community use, rural business, tourism or leisure use or infrastructure would also be considered.
No justification for policy; arbitrary; subjective	Countryside Around Towns is part of a considered planning strategy for East Lothian guiding development to the right places, allocating sufficient land for development and protecting the high quality environment of East Lothian including important landscape setting of some of its settlements.
Contrary to spirit of SPP	Scottish Planning Policy is written for the whole of Scotland and allows different approaches in pressured areas of countryside such as East Lothian. Good place making is a major aim of Scottish Planning Policy and landscape setting is widely acknowledged as one of the key considerations to creating good places. The local development plan balances the need for new development with a mitigation strategy of protection for key landscapes; adjacent to towns and villages this is by way of Countryside Around Towns designation.
Seton Mains boundary needs redrawn	Seton Mains has been redrawn to exclude the settlement from the Countryside Around Towns area.
Explain relationships with DC1 and SLA (Scottish Government) both have a role in protecting landscapes which should be explained better	This is explained in paragraph 4.8 of this technical note.

**Community Councils, Area Partnerships and Community Groups:**

Haddington and District Community Council :	Include further land at Clerkington in the Countryside Around Towns area.	Haddington already has extensive areas of landscape around it subject to the Countryside Around Towns policy. New development that commenced in 2016 at Dovecote near Clerkington will change the character of that part of Haddington and the potential for Countryside Around Towns designation should be reassessed at the time of the next review of the local development plan when the full visual effect of that development can be seen.
Ormiston	Support for Countryside	Noted

Community Council	Around Towns as proposed	
Cockenzie & Port Seton Community Council	Support as Countryside Around Towns prevents coalescence and protects natural areas and prime quality land. Do not want Cockenzie to coalesce with Blindwells	Noted
Dunbar Community Council	Support the proposed Countryside Around Towns area at Belhaven/West Barns	Noted
North Berwick Community Council	Strong support to protect individuality of settlements and landscape around them	Noted
Pencaitland Community Council	Supports the Countryside Around Towns policy	Noted
Gullane Area Community Council	Strongly supports the policy to protect rural character of East Lothian. Suggest it be extended around Aberlady, Dirleton Gullane and Drem	Support for the policy noted. The justification for each CAT area is described individually within this technical note.  The countryside immediately around Drem that forms its landscape setting is broadly similar and therefore of equal quality. Countryside Around Towns designation is not considered necessary.
Prestonpans Community Council	Include Morrison's Haven and Greenhills as Countryside Around Towns areas	Morrison's Haven is part of the designated Green Belt which performs a similar function to Countryside Around Towns. There is therefore no need to allocate this as a Countryside Around Towns area. The Greenhills area is part of Prop EGT1: Land at Former Cockenzie Power Station and therefore is not appropriate for Countryside Around Towns designation.
Dunbar & East Linton Area Partnership	Supports Countryside Around Towns policy. Important to maintain the separation between West Barns /Belhaven/ Dunbar. Supports protection and active recreation of Countryside Around Towns areas and considers that some development e.g. caravan parks should be	Support noted. The Countryside Around Towns policy specifies the development that would be permitted and this includes rural business, tourism and leisure uses.

	permitted.	
Haddington Area Partnership	Supports the introduction of a Countryside Around Towns policy	Noted
Preston Seton Gosford Area Partnership	Support prevents coalescence and keeps open spaces	Noted
North Berwick Coastal Area Partnership	Supports protection to the south and east of North Berwick and supports the Countryside Around Towns proposals around Blindwells.	Noted
HADAS	Neither supports nor opposes; landscape is key to protecting the character of East Lothian. Countryside Around Towns areas must include designed landscapes and woodland whether designated or not. Detailed settlement strategies should allow these areas to form positive parts of towns	Noted.  Gardens and Designed Landscapes that are close to a settlement and are necessary for Countryside around Towns objectives are included within Countryside Around Towns areas.
Sustaining Dunbar; Green Party and Common Weal	Countryside Around Towns is supported as it provides growing space and land for biodiversity.	Noted
Aberlady Historic Environment Society	Too limited around Aberlady	Not agreed. It is considered that the designated Countryside Around Towns area at Aberlady covers sufficient parts of its landscape setting.
Bolton Residents	Supports the policy	Noted
Coastal Regeneration Alliance	Supports land south of Cockenzie as a Countryside Around Towns area	Noted

**Members of the Public:**

Gullane	Muirfield golf course	Not agreed. Muirfield Golf Course is included because
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	should be <u>out</u> of Countryside Around Towns Area	of the part it plays in the landscape setting of the eastern side of Gullane. And in the views from Greywalls Designed Landscape.
Gullane	Support for Muirfield golf course in the Countryside Around Towns Area	This area is included as Countryside Around Towns
Gullane	Saltcoats should be in Countryside Around Towns area	Not agreed. Saltcoats field does have a sufficiently distinctive landscape to merit designation as Countryside Around Towns. It is also an allocated development proposal.
Aberlady	Bickerton field should be in Countryside Around Towns Area; support others areas	Support for Countryside Around Towns noted. Bickerton field was a reasonable alternative housing allocation. Another site was a preferred housing allocation and is included in the LDP as Prop NK 10. As a result the Bickerton field is no longer being taken forward and the field and farm form part of the east Aberlady Countryside Around Towns area.
Aberlady	Support as proposed	This area is included as Countryside Around Towns
Dirleton	Support as proposed	This area is included as Countryside Around Towns
Gullane	Support as proposed	This area is included as Countryside Around Towns
North Berwick, Law and land to south and east	Support as proposed	This area is included as Countryside Around Towns
North Berwick, land to west	Proposed for inclusion	Not supported. The land to the west of North Berwick is not regarded as appropriate for Countryside Around Towns designation, as some land has been allocated for residential development PROP NK5: Land at Ferrygate Farm and the landscape setting of this part of North Berwick is not regarded as important as the designated areas.
Land south of Longniddry	Should be in Countryside Around Towns area	Not supported as Countryside Around Towns because the Council has decided to support it for development. Land between Longniddry and the area of land safeguarded for future expansion of Blindwells is included in the Countryside Around Towns area to avoid future settlement coalescence
Prestonpans, Greenhills Morrison's Haven	Should be in Countryside Around Towns area	The Morrison's Haven area is part of the designated Green Belt which performs a similar function to Countryside Around Towns. There is therefore no need to allocate this as a Countryside Around Towns area. The Greenhills area is part of Prop EGT1: Land at Former Cockenzie Power Station and therefore is not appropriate for Countryside Around Towns designation.
Land between Longniddry and Port Seton	Support as proposed	This area is included as Countryside Around Towns
South of Seton House and	Support as proposed	This area is included as Countryside Around Towns

around St Germain's		
Seton Mains	Should not be part of a Countryside Around Towns area	Agreed. Removed from Countryside Around Towns area
Seton West Mains	Support as proposed	This area is included as Countryside Around Towns
Ormiston	Support as proposed	This area is included as Countryside Around Towns
Tranent	Support as proposed	This area is included as Countryside Around Towns
Haddington, land to south of Letham House	Should not be included as a Countryside Around Towns area	Not agreed. The landscape of smallholdings to the west of Haddington including land to the south of Letham house is an appropriate area to include as Countryside Around Towns for the reasons referred to in the statement justifying designation at para 5.4 of this technical note.
Haddington, land at Clerkington	Support as proposed	This area is included as Countryside Around Towns
Belhaven/West Barns	Some support as proposed; some object	This area is included as Countryside Around Towns
East Linton	Support as proposed	This area is included as Countryside Around Towns

**National Interest Groups:**

East Linton (National Trust for Scotland)	The Countryside Around Towns area at East Linton should be extended to include land north and east of the Tyne	Not agreed. Sufficient land to the east of the Tyne is included in the Countryside Around Towns area. Land to the north of the Tyne is not dominant in the landscape setting of the village due to its topography and is not therefore considered appropriate for inclusion.
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## 6 THE PROPOSED LDP APPROACH

### Countryside Around Towns

- 6.1 The Proposed Local Development Plan has designated Countryside Around Towns areas at the following the following East Lothian settlements:  
Prestonpans, Cockenzie/Port Seton, Tranent, Longniddry, Blindwells, Macmerry, Ormiston, Haddington, Aberlady, Gullane, Dirleton, North Berwick, East Linton, Dunbar / Belhaven, West Barns. Policy DC8: Countryside Around Towns applies.
- 6.2 Countryside Around Towns policy will be particularly relevant in the event of a shortfall in the 5-year housing land supply. In such a circumstance, Policy 7 Maintaining a Five Year Housing Land Supply of SESplan applies. Development proposed on greenfield sites because of a shortfall in housing land supply must be in keeping with the character of the

settlement and local area. Countryside Around Towns designation would be expected to be taken into account in the assessment of any development site proposed under Policy 7.

- 6.3 Countryside Around Towns designation works alongside other local development plan policies, including other development in the countryside policies, special landscape areas policy and conservation area policy. Each has its own variation as to the type of development that may be permitted without harming the landscape or heritage asset for which the designation is justified.
- 6.4 Countryside Around Towns designation will be reviewed for the next local development plan; it is intended to be in place for the lifetime of this local development plan.

### **Green Belt**

- 6.5 The Council's preferred approach as outlined in the Main Issues Report was to modify the boundaries of the green belt and release land from the green belt for new built development where it was justified by a need to accommodate strategic development requirements and it would direct development to more suitable sites than could be achieved beyond the green belt, such as where regeneration could be promoted and/or where public transport accessibility was good. If coalescence of settlements was a consequence this would only be supported if the advantages of the site in question clearly outweigh those of other sites and the resultant loss of settlement identity that would arise from its development. New long term and defensible boundaries would be defined and every effort made to introduce green corridors, wedges, open spaces and woodland planting. No changes to the uses and type of development that would be considered appropriate in the green belt. The reasonable alternative approach was to not modify the boundaries of the green belt.
- 6.6 The preferred approach fitted with the preferred spatial strategy of compact growth rather than dispersed growth.
- 6.7 MIR responses showed that overall more respondents supported the preferred approach to the green belt than the reasonable alternative.
- 6.8 This included qualified support from the **key agencies** with Scottish Natural Heritage noted the high quality environment and that landscape is a natural asset that is required to maintain the character and landscape setting of settlements. Maintaining separation between settlements is important as are longer term landscape safeguards and strategic green network connections including within some areas proposed for development in the MIR such as Goshen. Of the **community councils** Humbie/Saltoun/Bolton, and North Berwick supported the preferred approach with Prestonpans, Cockenzie and Duppender supporting the reasonable alternative approach. Most landowners, developers and agents supported the preferred approach to the greenbelt. Members of the public and local interest groups were equally split on whether to support the preferred or reasonable alternative approaches to the green belt. Some loss of land in the green belt was seen as inevitable particularly in the area closest to Edinburgh but there was an expressed concern



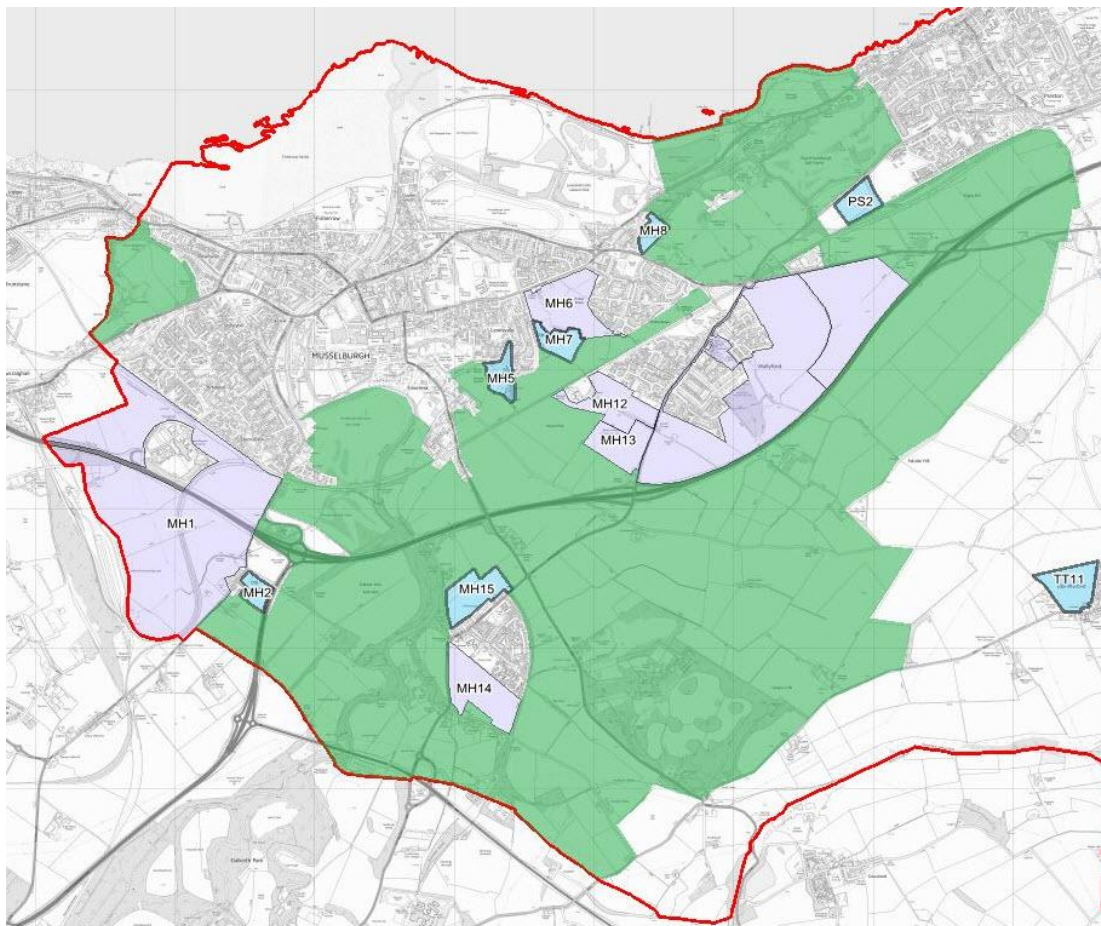
over the potential coalescence, including the west becoming a suburb of Edinburgh, and loss of identity of settlements. Some saw loss of green belt land as preferable to loss of land in more remote rural areas, others saw green belt land as all the more necessary to protect because of its potential scarcity in the face of large scale development.

- 6.9 The proposed LDP conforms with SESplan and has confirmed a spatial strategy of compact growth. The western part of East Lothian is adjacent to Edinburgh where much of the demand for new growth arises and it is also very accessible for public transport. Communities such as Wallyford and Whitecraig present regeneration opportunities which development can help to achieve. Taking these factors into account the LDP has consequently allocated a number of sites for development within the former green belt. The table below identifies these and for ease of reference these are also shown on the map below. Some development sites on the edge of Musselburgh for example at Edenhall (MH12) and Pinkie (MH13) were not previously part of the green belt and so are not included in the table below.

**Table: Sites Removed from Green Belt**

Site Ref	Name	Comments
MH1	Craighall	Craighall is a large site that includes land previously allocated for development in the 2008 East Lothian Local Plan on either side of Queen Margaret University. Land on the other part of Craighall on the west side of the A1 lies adjacent to the Midlothian administrative boundary. Adjacent land in Midlothian has been allocated for business development and for residential development at the new settlement of Shawfair, currently under construction. Allocation of this site leaves the city and Musselburgh bypasses as robust longer term green belt boundaries.
MH2	Oldcraighall	Land at Oldcraighall lies between the existing village and the A720 city bypass which will form the new robust green belt boundary.
MH3	Oldcraighall Junction SW	Allocated for employment use. Adjacent to city bypass and Craighall (MH1) allocation
MH8	Levenhall	Located east of existing housing at Ravenshaugh this site is a former market garden. It is low lying and has well defined boundaries on its northern and western edges where it adjoins Musselburgh. Its eastern field boundary edge is less well defined.
MH10	Dolphinston	This site is east of the Wallyford expansion area previously allocated in the 2008 East Lothian Local Plan and is bounded by the A1 and A199. It is an open area of land with long intervisible distance views over it from the roads.
MH12	Barbachlaw	Part of this site was allocated for development in the previous local plan. Lies adjacent to the southern edge of Wallyford.
MH13	Howe Mire	This site is located in a generally open and flat part of the green belt and forms a south western extension of the Barbachlaw (MH12) site at Wallyford. Its boundary to the south is not defined by any landscape features.
MH14	Whitecraig South	Land to the south of Whitecraig is contained by the wooded former railway line to the east and local roads to the south and west. New defensible green belt boundaries must be formed at the western and southern boundaries. It adjoins Whitecraig to the north.
MH15	Whitecraig North	Land to the north of Whitecraig is contained in the wider landscape by the wooded area to its west and by the adjoining existing north boundary of the village. Its eastern and northern boundaries are not defined by landscape features and new defensible green belt boundaries must be formed. It adjoins Whitecraig to the north.

- 6.10 The overall area of the previous green belt has reduced in size. The development of the Green Network in association with the development of relevant sites will help to mitigate the impact of these green belt abstractions and also provide for enhanced access to the countryside for recreation.
- 6.11 Because of the geographical restrictions of the East Lothian administrative boundary the green belt could only realistically have been considered for expansion to the east/south east towards Tranent and Elphinstone. However the green belt boundary here is an appropriate one to retain given that it follows the high part of the Fa'side ridge, a natural point in the landscape for the setting of Edinburgh and Musselburgh and Wallyford. It also follows local roads where possible making it clear where the boundary lies. The green belt boundary to the east ends at the Johnnie Cope road leading between Tranent and Prestonpans. This is now coterminous with the proposed Countryside Around Towns boundary.
- 6.12 Policy DC7: Development in the Edinburgh Green Belt controls development within the green belt.



Map: Green belt area (shown green) as proposed in LDP (Note: Proposals Map should always be referred to)

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

*Countryside Around Towns* – a planning policy applied to countryside adjacent to a settlement to protect its landscape setting or to prevent coalescence between settlements

*Coalescence* - coalescence occurs when development joins one settlement to another without a significant area of open or undeveloped land between them. The distinctive individual identity of a place is lost when there is no clear, generally open, land separation between the two that delineate the end of one and the beginning of another.

St Baldred's Craule

Tyne Mouth



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