

Falkirk Local Development Plan 3
Topic Papers March 2024

Green Belt



Falkirk Council

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This topic paper contains evidence on the green belt in the Falkirk Council area to support the preparation of Falkirk LDP3 and provide input to the LDP3 Evidence Report. Green belts are a key spatial planning tool and have been used since the 1960s in Falkirk to manage urban growth. In Falkirk, the green belt generally takes the form of wedges of countryside which separate the main settlements.
- 1.2 The scope of this paper covers the current national policy framework; existing LDP2 green belt policy and its relationship with the countryside policy in LDP2; the evolution of the green belt in Falkirk; an overview of the current green belt in Falkirk; and a description of where the main issues and pressures have been experienced.



2. Policy Context

National

- 2.1 **National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4)** deals with green belts under Policy 8, and states that the policy intent is *'to facilitate compact urban growth and use the land around towns sustainably'*. The policy outcomes are listed as:
- Development is directed to the right locations, urban density is increased and unsustainable growth is prevented.
 - The character, landscape, natural setting and identity of settlements is protected and enhanced.
 - Nature networks are supported and land is managed to help tackle climate change.
- 2.2 NPF4 goes on to outline that *'LDPs should consider using green belts to support their spatial strategy as a settlement management tool to restrict development around towns and cities'*. It states it may be necessary *'where there is a significant danger of unsustainable growth in car-based commuting or suburbanisation of the countryside'*. Viewed as a management tool to restrict development, NPF4 states that *'boundaries should be based on evidence and should be clearly identified in plans'*.
- 2.3 Development proposals within a designated green belt will only be supported in a limited number of circumstances, and provided a number of requirements are also met. This is set out in ten bullet points.
- 2.4 NPF4's approach to green belt is largely consistent with that set out previously in Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) 2014, which is reflected in Falkirk's green belt objectives set out in LDP2.

Current LDP2 Green Belt Policy Approach

- 2.5 **Falkirk Council Local Development Plan 2 (LDP2)**, adopted in August 2020, sets out the current green belt policy. It designates the following four areas as green belt:
- Falkirk/Stenhousemuir/Grangemouth/Laurieston Corridor
 - Polmont/Grangemouth/Bo'ness/Linlithgow Corridor
 - Falkirk/Larbert/Denny/Bonnybridge Corridor
 - Callendar Park and Woods
- 2.6 The green belt forms an important part of the spatial strategy for the Falkirk Council area. Policy PE15 - Green Belt states that 'the purpose of the green belt is to direct development to the most appropriate locations and support regeneration; to protect and enhance the character, landscape setting and identity of the settlement; and to protect and provide access to open space'. Development will only be permitted where proposals satisfy countryside policies and will not undermine the stated purposes of the green belt.
- 2.7 LDP2 Policy PE15 predates the approval of NPF4 but it is considered consistent with the approach taken by NPF4 as described in paragraphs 2.1 to 2.4 above.

Relationship with Falkirk LDP2 PE14 Countryside Policy

- 2.8 In the Falkirk Council area, the green belt is one of several environmental designations and constraints operating in the countryside around the settlements, so there is inevitably overlap between policies. Whilst most of these overlapping policies protect very specific assets, there is potential scope for confusion between Policy PE15 Green Belt and Policy PE14 Countryside.
- 2.9 Policy PE14 Countryside defines the countryside as the area outwith the urban and village limits. Within the countryside, the policy seeks to prevent sporadic development which could impact on the character of the countryside and to direct development to existing villages to sustain their vitality and support their services and infrastructure.
- 2.10 In parallel, Policy PE15 Green Belt identifies those areas of countryside which perform the specific functions outlined in 2.6 above, and within which a stronger presumption against development operates, compared with PE14. Proposals must firstly satisfy the countryside criteria set out in PE14 before being assessed by PE15 to ensure that the purpose of the green belt would not be undermined.

3. Evolution of Green Belt in Falkirk

Origins

- 3.1 A green belt was first designated in the Falkirk area in 1962 through a modification by the Secretary of State to the County Development Plan. It stretched in a broad arc from Kinnaird in the north to Polmont in the east. The original objectives of the green belt were to protect areas of countryside and maintain the physical separation of Falkirk and Grangemouth in particular. Various strategic releases were made to the green belt through amendments to the County Development Plan in the 1960s and 1970s.

Rural Local Plan 1983

- 3.2 The first consolidated version of the green belt after the 1972 Planning Act appeared in the Rural Local Plan 1983. This plan widened green belt objectives to include protection of good agricultural land, segregation of urban and rural uses and to provide a corridor for essential services. The coverage of the green belt was extended into the Kinneil area in the east and to the west of Skinflats in the north.

Central 2000 Structure Plan 1992

- 3.3 Central 2000: The Structure Plan for Central Region, approved in August 1992, broadly confirmed the existing areas of green belt and required that further areas were identified to prevent the coalescence of Falkirk with Larbert/Stenhousemuir/Carron/Carronshore. It also required the green belt to protect the landscape setting of Callendar House. At this stage the key objectives of the green belt were to prevent the coalescence of settlements and to protect the landscape setting of towns.

Rural Local Plan 1994

- 3.4 The areas of green belt required by Central 2000 were defined in detail through the Rural Local Plan adopted in 1994. In addition to preventing coalescence and protecting landscape setting, the Local Plan supported the principle of the green belt to provide areas of countryside recreation and underlined the commitment to the enhancement of the green belt through the Greenspace Initiative.

Green Belt Revisions 1995-2007

- 3.5 After the Rural Local Plan was adopted in 1994 there were some changes to the green belt boundary in subsequent reviews of settlement based Local Plans, notably south and east of Bo'ness, and at Middlefield in Falkirk. Following that, the Falkirk Council Structure Plan, originally approved in 2002, and altered in 2007, provided the strategic basis for green belt policy going forward. The Structure Plan endorsed the continuing role of the green belt in the area and emphasised its long-term nature. It required further areas of green belt between: Falkirk and Bonnybridge; Denny and Bonnybridge; and Bo'ness and Grangemouth, with local plans defining the detailed Green Belt boundaries.

Falkirk Council Local Plan 2010

- 3.6 The Falkirk Council Local Plan, adopted in 2010, defined the detailed boundaries of the new areas of green belt required by the Structure Plan. It also reviewed the boundaries of existing areas of green belt but left them largely unaltered, as it was considered that required development to 2020 could be accommodated within the existing boundaries. The only changes were the removal of the stadium site at Westfield, Falkirk, which was specifically sanctioned by the Structure Plan, and a minor adjustment at Glensburgh, Grangemouth.

Falkirk Local Development Plan (LDP1) 2015

- 3.7 The preparation of the Falkirk Local Development Plan (LDP1) replaced the Structure and Local Plan with a single document. In considering the future spatial strategy for the area, the role and extent of the green belt was comprehensively reviewed, and potential strategic releases considered. The LDP made significant green belt releases at east Bonnybridge and south Bo'ness to facilitate development, whilst green belt designation was removed east of the A905 at Skinflats on the grounds that this area made no contribution to green belt objectives.

Falkirk Local Development Plan 2 (LDP2) 2020

- 3.8 The current local development plan covering the Falkirk Council area is the Falkirk Local Development Plan 2 (LDP2), which was adopted in August 2020. Extensions to the green belt were made at Carriden, Bo'ness and east of Hallglen. Following the LDP Examination, substantial green belt releases were made to the south of Bo'ness at Crawfield Road and North Bank Farm to accommodate housing growth.

Overview

- 3.9 From the above, it can be seen that the green belt in Falkirk has evolved and changed over its 50 year life. From the 1960s through to the 2000s, its scope and extent grew from its original Falkirk/Grangemouth nucleus to provide restraint to the growth of other settlements in the area. Successive development plans have undertaken reviews of the boundaries of the green belt and releases have been promoted to allow for long term development were deemed necessary. There has been a large degree of continuity in the purpose and objectives of the green belt locally, and a reasonable degree of success in achieving those objectives. Of particular note has been the impact of the Falkirk Greenspace Initiative which has promoted landscape, ecological, recreational and access improvements within the green belt over a period of some 30 years.



4. Green Belt Overview

Extent and Form

- 4.1 The green belt in the Falkirk Council area ([shown here](#)) covers approximately 40.3 sq.km, or around one sixth of the Council area, stretching from Denny in the west to Bo'ness in the east, and north as far as the Kincardine Bridge. Rather than encircling the settlements, it generally takes the form of wedges of countryside which separate the various distinct but closely spaced settlements which form the urban structure of the area.
- 4.2 The wedges of green belt vary in width from nothing up to about two miles. There are four key pinch points: where Carron Road crosses the River Carron between Falkirk and Stenhousemuir; at Westfield, between Falkirk and Grangemouth, where the removal of the Falkirk Stadium from the green belt has created a discontinuity; at Laurieston, where the outlier of Callendar Park is detached from the main Grangemouth-Polmont green belt; and Junction 4 of the M9.
- 4.3 Given the green belt in Falkirk is formed by wedges rather than wrapping entirely around the network of settlements, there is scope in theory for the urban area to expand over time. However, the consequences for individual settlements vary. Grangemouth for example is encircled by green belt, as is almost all of Bo'ness. Although Larbert/Stenhousemuir has green belt only to the south and east, other physical constraints to the north and west, mean that the green belt effectively constrains its future growth.



Functions of Falkirk's Green Belt

- 4.4 **Managing Urban Growth.** Managing and directing urban growth and promoting regeneration within the urban area has been an important function of Falkirk's green belt. During the 1980s and 1990s, strict curbs on the outward growth of Falkirk and Larbert/ Stenhousemuir facilitated the regeneration of large brownfield sites created by the decline of traditional industries. From 2000 to 2020, the green belt particularly reinforced settlement strategies in Larbert/ Stenhousemuir and Bo'ness, directing growth to preferred sites at Bellsdyke/Hill of Kinnaird and Drum Farm respectively. This approach is consistent with NPF4 Policy Outcomes which states, *'Development is directed to the right locations, urban density is increased and unsustainable growth is prevented'*. NPF4 further states, *'LDPs should consider using green belts, to support their spatial strategy as a settlement management tool to restrict development around towns and cities'*.
- 4.5 **Visual Separation of Settlements.** The separation of settlements has historically been the primary function of the green belt in the Falkirk area and remains a key criterion for designation. This has been reflected in successive settlement strategies which have emphasised the importance of maintaining the identity of individual communities, rather than letting them merge into a single urban area.
- 4.6 **Landscape Setting.** Protecting the landscape setting of settlements is a function of green belts within Falkirk. Over the last thirty years positive management and transformational enhancements have been made through the Falkirk Greenspace Initiative. Since its conception in 1993, Falkirk Greenspace has significantly improved the quality of the urban fringe through extensive programmes of woodland planting and management. Notable examples include the enhancement of landscape settings for flagship projects in the green belt such as the Falkirk Wheel and the Helix.
- 4.7 Both functions of separating settlements visually and enhancing their landscape setting are consistent with NPF4 Policy Outcomes which states, *'The character, landscape, natural setting and identity of settlements is protected and enhanced.'*
- 4.8 **Access to Open Space.** This is a further traditional function of green belt in the Falkirk area. Green belt land hosts a range of recreational uses such as parks, community woodlands, golf courses etc as well as outdoor access routes, many of which are now included in the Core Paths Plan. Outdoor access provision has been greatly extended under the Greenspace Initiative and the Outdoor Access Strategy.
- 4.9 **Nature Networks.** The maintenance and development of nature networks has not previously been a stated objective of the green belt, but through the Falkirk Greenspace Initiative, this has clearly been a benefit. Falkirk's relatively narrow green belt corridors are important to the continuity and sustainability of nature networks in the area, and this could be more explicitly cited as a function. This would be consistent with NPF4 Policy Outcomes which states, *'Nature networks are supported and land is managed to help tackle climate change'*.

5. Green Belt Character by Area

Northern Area

Location

- 5.1 The northern area is bounded to the north by the M876/A876, to the east by the A905, to the south by the River Carron and to the west by the Urban Limit of Stenhousemuir/Hill of Kinnaird.

Landscape

- 5.2 East of the M9, the area comprises primarily the flat, low lying carseland. The carseland is very open and relatively treeless with large scale rectilinear fields, few hedges and a few steadings linked by minor roads. Dominant features include the various road corridors and electricity power lines which run through or adjacent to the area, views of the Grangemouth industries to the south, and views to the Ochil Hills to the north.
- 5.3 West of the M9, the landscape is more varied and interesting. To the north, the topography rises up gently to the urban edge of Stenhousemuir. North of the Bellsdyke Road, tree belts and specimen trees form the attractive remnants of policy woodland associated with Kinnaird House and protected by a TPO. Again, views north to the Ochils are significant. To the south, the edge of Carronshore presents an untidier edge, but again there are attractive elements of former policy woodland associated with Carron House, adjacent to the River Carron.
- 5.4 The northern area comprises 'Carselands' and 'Lowland River Valley' Landscape Character Types, and the following Landscape Character Areas:
- 4 (iv) Lower Carron/Bonnywater Water
 - 4 (v) Falkirk – Grangemouth Urban Fringe
 - 6 (i) Skinflats
 - 6 (ii) Carse of Forth

SG09 Landscape Character Assessment and Landscape Designations (April 2021) provides further detailed location maps, details of forces for change, sensitivities and guidelines for each of the Local Landscape Character Areas.

Land Use

- 5.5 The land use is predominantly agricultural apart from some scattered dwellings and the village of Skinflats on the eastern edge.

Function

- 5.6 The function of this part of the green belt has been primarily to control the eastern spread of Stenhousemuir, directing growth towards the Bellsdyke/Hill of Kinnaird area, and to protect its landscape setting to the east. The area has relatively little role to play in terms of avoiding coalescence.

Boundaries

- 5.7 Generally, boundaries are well-defined by strong physical features: the M876/A876 to the north, the A905 to the east and the River Carron to the south. To the west, the boundaries at Stenhousemuir are generally robust, formed by local roads. Around Carronshore, the boundary is formed by the backs of residential and industrial premises.



Central Area

Location

- 5.8 The central area forms a narrow arc of land extending from the River Carron at Langlees in the northwest to Junction 4 of the M9 in the southeast. It is bounded to the south and west by the urban area of Falkirk, Laurieston and Polmont, and to the north and east by the urban area of Grangemouth.

Landscape

- 5.9 The north western part of the central area, from Langlees south to Laurieston, comprises the flat, low lying carseland between Falkirk and Grangemouth. The Helix park and the Kelpies provide a positive and iconic focus to this area, set within the extensive community woodland of Cobblebrae, Abbotshaugh and Dalderse which was planted in the early days of the Falkirk Greenspace Initiative. Less positive elements include infrastructure in the form of the elevated M9, other major distributor roads, power lines and the sewage treatment works at Dalderse. The urban edge is mainly formed by residential properties at Langlees, industrial uses and the Falkirk Stadium at Middlefield/Westfield.
- 5.10 From Laurieston eastwards, the carseland continues, but is bounded to the south by an east-west escarpment, on top of which the urban areas of Laurieston and Polmont sit. The line of the Antonine Wall follows the top of the escarpment. The escarpment is dissected by various watercourses and is complemented by tree belts which give it a partially wooded appearance from the motorway. Once again, the motorway, particularly Junction 5, other roads, and power lines are dominant features, as are the stacked containers at Thornbridge Industrial Estate. There are also clusters of urban development around the junction at Beancross including Klondyke, Falkirk Distillery and Beancross Farm. The backcloth of industrial Grangemouth is particularly evident in the eastern part of the area.
- 5.11 Callendar Park and Wood forms an outlier to the main part of the green belt, covering the designed landscape of Callendar House, and its wooded policies which rise up behind Falkirk forming an attractive backcloth to the town. This area of green belt was expanded southwards by LDP2 along the Westquarter Burn to provide separation between Hallglen and the Overton estate.
- 5.12 The central area comprises 'Lowland River Valley' Landscape Character Type, and the following Landscape Character Area:
- 4 (v) Falkirk – Grangemouth Urban Fringe

SG09 Landscape Character Assessment and Landscape Designations (April 2021) provides further detailed location maps, details of forces for change, sensitivities and guidelines for each of the Local Landscape Character Areas.

Land Use

- 5.13 The land use within this part of the green belt is fairly diverse. As noted above, there are extensive new areas of community woodland to the north west, within which the major recreational uses of the Kelpies, the Helix and the Falkirk Stadium are set. Agricultural fields on the carse are used for grazing or are currently unused. Further recreational uses are apparent further east including the cluster of hotels/restaurants/garden centre/distillery around Junction 5, Grangemouth golf course, Polmonthill ski slope, Millhall fishery, and Gray Buchanan Park. Grandsable cemetery is also a significant feature.

Function

- 5.14 The primary function of this part of the green belt is to separate the urban areas of Falkirk, Grangemouth, Laurieston and Polmont. This role can be particularly appreciated from the M9, A9 and A905. There is also a subsidiary function of separating Laurieston/Westquarter from Polmont, whilst Callendar Park/Wood helps to separate Falkirk from Reddingmuirhead.
- 5.15 There is also a landscape function, particularly in the protection of the partially wooded escarpment which provides an attractive setting for Polmont, and Callendar Park & Wood which is an important part of Falkirk's landscape setting. Clearly the area has a strong recreational aspect, which has been intensified by the Helix/Kelpies.

Boundaries

- 5.16 Boundaries are fairly robust, formed generally by roads, railway embankments, and the River Carron or urban edges. The boundary to the north east of the Falkirk Stadium is the exception since it is formed by the notional future extent of the stadium development, rather than any physical feature on the ground.



Eastern Area

Location

- 5.17 The eastern area extends from Junction 4 of the M9 to the village of Muirhouses, wrapping round the southern, western and eastern side of Bo'ness. It is bounded to the south by the main Glasgow-Edinburgh railway line and the Council boundary with West Lothian. To the north the A904 forms the boundary, with an outlier extending out over the Kinneil Kerse foreshore to the Forth Estuary. This area of green belt was expanded by LDP2 to include land at Carriden Estate.

Landscape

- 5.18 This part of the green belt is characterised by attractive rolling hills of elevation 50-150 meters, with a general downslope towards the Forth Estuary. The high point is Airngath Hill at 171 meters, to the south of Bo'ness. The western section is dominated by the incised valley of the River Avon, to the east of which is the active landfill site at Avondale. Apart from Kinneil Wood, to the west of Bo'ness, and the wooded gorge of the River Avon, woodland is generally confined to shelter belts or road lines or hedgerow trees. Open arable/ pasture fields are medium to large in scale, bounded by hawthorn/beechn hedges. Steadings tend to be set prominently on hill tops.
- 5.19 The Kinneil Kerse outlier is flat, low lying land at the edge of the estuary, reclaimed by landfilling over many years. At its western end is a lagoon. Scrub woodland is colonising parts of the area.
- 5.20 The eastern area comprises 'Lowland River Valley' and 'Coastal Farmlands' Landscape Character Types, and the following Landscape Character Areas:
- 4 (i) Avon Valley
 - 5 (i) Manuel Farmlands
 - 5 (ii) Bo'ness Coastal Hills
 - 5 (iii) Grangemouth/Kinneil Flats

SG09 Landscape Character Assessment and Landscape Designations (April 2021) provides further detailed location maps, details of forces for change, sensitivities and guidelines for each of the Local Landscape Character Areas.

Land Use

- 5.21 The area is predominantly agricultural, with the exception of the Avondale landfill at the western end, Kinneil Wood, and West Lothian golf course which overlooks Bo'ness on the northern slopes of Airngath Hill. The Bo'ness and Kinneil Railway runs through the area.

Function

- 5.22 This part of the green belt is primarily intended to protect the landscape setting of Bo'ness and Muirhouses. It also separates Bo'ness from Polmont and Linlithgow, whilst the Kinneil Kerse outlier separates Bo'ness from Grangemouth.

Boundaries

- 5.23 Boundaries are fairly robust, with the Glasgow-Edinburgh railway line providing the edge to the south, and the A904, the estuary and the urban edge of Bo'ness provide the northern boundaries. However, recent LDP2 housing land releases at Crawfield Road and North Bank Farm have made the southern boundary less robust than it was.



Western Area

Location

- 5.24 The western area extends from Mungal Farm, Falkirk in the east along the valleys of the River Carron and the Bonny Water to Denny and Bonnybridge in the west. It is bounded to the north by the urban area of Larbert/Stenhousemuir and the B905 Larbert-Denovan Road, and to the south by Falkirk Grahamston-Glasgow railway line and the Edinburgh Glasgow main line.

Landscape

- 5.25 The natural landscape is dominated by the relative flat, open valleys of the Carron and the Bonny Water. The Forth & Clyde Canal also runs east-west through the area. Mature woodland plantations at Roughcastle and Chacefield occupy ridges and provide important and highly visible linear skyline features. However, the landscape is generally fragmented and degraded by a range of sporadic urban uses, the M876, overhead power lines, operational and disused railway lines.
- 5.26 The western area comprises 'Lowland Hill Fringes', 'Lowland Plateau' and 'Lowland River Valley' Landscape Character Types, and the following Landscape Character Areas:
- 2 (ii) Touch Hills Fringe
 - 3 (iii) Castlecary/Shieldhill Plateau Farmland
 - 4 (iv) Lower Carron/Bonny Water

SG09 Landscape Character Assessment and Landscape Designations (April 2021) provides further detailed location maps, details of forces for change, sensitivities and guidelines for each of the Local Landscape Character Areas.



Land Use

- 5.27 Whilst agricultural use predominates, there are substantial pockets of industrial use, for example at Stirling Road, Lochlands and Roughmote. A major electricity sub-station and sewage treatment works are located to the east of Bonnybridge. Cemeteries are located at Falkirk and Hills of Dunipace, golf courses at Carmuir and Bonnybridge, with playing fields at Stirling Road.

Function

- 5.28 The principal function is to separate the settlements of Larbert, Falkirk, Denny and Bonnybridge, and to protect the landscape setting of these communities. An ancillary function is to protect views from the Falkirk Wheel, which is an important tourist attraction in the area. There is also substantial recreational and access provision in the area.

Boundaries

- 5.29 Boundaries generally follow strong features such as railway lines, roads, watercourses or urban edges. At Mungall, Falkirk and Mydub, Denny, green belt edges have been formed in conjunction with future development proposals which are not currently marked by strong physical features. The bus depot and neighbouring business/industrial uses impact on the character of the green belt on Stirling Road.



6. Development Pressures by Area

- 6.1 The green belt continues to be subject to development pressure, both in terms of the outward spread of settlements, and more sporadic developments which may be free-standing, or extensions to existing uses. These are evident from planning applications and representations to Falkirk Council Local Development Plan 2 (FLDP2).
- 6.2 The main strategic pressures may be summarised as:
- Residential development pressures, particularly east of Stenhousemuir and to the south of Bo'ness;
 - Waste management and energy development pressures in the Avondale area; and
 - Pressures for ad hoc intensification or expansion of existing businesses in the green belt.

These pressures are looked at in a little more detail below.

Northern Area

- 6.3 Kinnaird, Bensfield, Roughlands and Kirkton Farm, on the eastern edge of Stenhousemuir, are under continuing pressure for residential development. To date housing proposals put forward have been rejected. Larbert and Stenhousemuir has been one of the fastest growing settlements in recent years, and the settlement strategy in LDP2 has been to continue to focus on the delivery of the strategic growth area at Bellsdyke and Hill of Kinnaird. A strategy of consolidation has therefore been adopted in recognition of the rapid and extensive growth which has taken place in the settlement over recent years, and the pressures this has placed on infrastructure. In March 2020 the LDP2 Examination Reporter concluded that allocation of these sites would undermine the spatial strategy for the settlement and that they should remain in the green belt. No modifications were therefore made to LDP2.

Central Area

- 6.4 Junction 5 of the M9 at Beancross/Inchrya is relatively narrow and a key pinch point in the central area green belt. It has seen continued pressure for a variety of tourism related urban land uses; new and extended uses in this area include Falkirk Whisky Distillery and Visitor Centre, Klondyke Garden Centre and the Premier Inn. Although there are a number of urban uses within the green belt in this area, it is considered that the overall purpose of the green belt is not compromised; it provides visual separation between Polmont and Grangemouth, and safeguards the identities of these communities and their landscape setting. In March 2020 the LDP2 Examination Reporter endorsed this view and concluded that removing businesses from the green belt was not justified. It was considered such removal would harmfully erode the important contribution that this green belt corridor makes to fulfilling the primary purpose of the Falkirk green belt, which is to safeguard the identity of communities by preventing development which would reduce their visual separation.

Eastern Area

- 6.5 There are ongoing residential development pressures to the south of Bo'ness. Recent significant green belt releases were made by the LDP2 Examination Reporter at Crawfield Road and North Bank Farm. However, despite representation Stacks Farm was not allocated, as it was considered development of the green belt in this location would impact on the identity of the conservation village of Muirhouses and potentially lead to its coalescence with Bo'ness.
- 6.6 There is ongoing pressure for an extension to the Avondale waste management facility for the processing and reuse of waste including energy from waste. The existing landfill and materials reprocessing facility represents a significant visual presence in the green belt. An energy from waste facility was granted planning permission in 2020.

Western Area

- 6.7 There have been residential development pressures to the east of Bonnybridge in the past and a wedge of land was removed from the green belt which forms mixed use Proposal MU20 in LDP2. The proposal has not been progressed. More recently there is pressure for green belt release at Head of Muir on the east side of Denny Road.
- 6.8 Pockets of industrial use in this area at Lochlands Industrial Estate and the Bus Depot along Stirling Road have presented a challenge to the green belt objectives in terms of their urbanising effect; although there have been pressures to expand these uses in the past, there are no current proposals that might further threaten the purpose of the green belt in this area.

7. Summary

- 7.1 Falkirk's green belt has been a successful strategic management tool in guiding new development and ensuring that the landscape setting and identity of settlements has been protected. Its integrity has been assessed and tested through successive development plan examinations, with pragmatic adjustments made when required. In this way its overall long-term value has been endorsed. Moving forward, LDP3 will seek to align with NPF4 Policy 8, and review green belt boundaries accordingly.



Sources

- [Falkirk Local Development Plan 2 \(FLDP2\)](#)
- [Falkirk Local Development Plan 2 Examination Report](#)
- [National Planning Framework 4](#)
- Falkirk Local Development Plan Technical Report 6 (Revised) Green Belt April 2013

