

Natural Environment

180 Policies Env 10 to Env 16 will play an important role in ensuring development proposals protect and where possible enhance Edinburgh's natural heritage. Further advice can be found in Council guidance.

Policy Env 10 Development in the Green Belt and Countryside

Within the Green Belt and Countryside shown on the Proposals Map, development will only be permitted where it meets one of the following criteria and would not detract from the landscape quality and/or rural character of the area:

- a) For the purposes of agriculture, woodland and forestry, horticulture or countryside recreation, or where a countryside location is essential and provided any buildings, structures or hard standing areas are of a scale and quality of design appropriate to the use.
- b) For the change of use of an existing building, provided the building is of architectural merit or a valuable element in the landscape and is worthy of retention. Buildings should be of domestic scale, substantially intact and structurally capable of conversion.
- c) For development relating to an existing use or building(s) such as an extension to a site or building, ancillary development or intensification of the use, provided the proposal is appropriate in type in terms of the existing use, of an appropriate scale, of high quality design and acceptable in terms of traffic impact.
- d) For the replacement of an existing building with a new building in the same use provided:
 - 1) the existing building is not listed or of architectural / historic merit;
 - 2) the existing building is of poor quality design and structural condition,
 - 3) the existing building is of domestic scale, has a lawful use and is not a temporary structure; and

4) the new building is of a similar or smaller size to the existing one, lies within the curtilage of the existing building and is of high design quality.

- 181 It is necessary to control the type and scale of development in the green belt to enable it to fulfil its important role in terms of landscape setting and countryside recreation as described in Part 1. However, the purpose of the green belt is not to prevent development from happening. This policy sets out the circumstances in which development in the green belt can be supported.
- 182 In Edinburgh, Countryside areas i.e. land outwith existing settlements, which are not designated green belt are considered to be of equivalent environmental importance. For this reason, it is appropriate to apply the same level of protection to both green belt and Countryside areas.
- 183 The key test for all proposals in the green belt and Countryside areas will be to ensure that the development does not detract from the landscape quality and/or rural character of the area. The Council's guidance 'Development in the Countryside and Green Belt' provides more detailed advice.

Policy Env 11 Special Landscape Areas

Planning permission will not be granted for development which would have a significant adverse impact on the special character or qualities of the Special Landscape Areas shown on the Proposals Map

- 184 This policy aims to protect Edinburgh's unique and diverse landscape which contributes to the city's distinctive character and scenic value. Special Landscape Areas (SLA) are local designations, which safeguard and enhance the character and quality of valued landscapes across the Council area.
- 185 A Statement of Importance has been prepared for each SLA and can be viewed on the Council's website. This sets out the essential qualities and characteristics of the area and the potential for enhancement. The Statements of Importance should be