



*Have your say on the
West Lothian Local Development Plan Proposed Plan
Consultation Response Form*

West Lothian Council has published its *Proposed Plan* together with supporting documents including an *Environmental Report (SEA)*, *Habitats Regulation Appraisal*, *Strategic Flood Risk Assessment* and *Equalities & Human Rights Impact Assessment*. These can be viewed on the West Lothian Council website at <http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/proposedplan>

If you wish to make representations on the *Proposed Plan* or associated documents, you are encouraged to use the online consultation portal. It's quick and easy and will help us to process representations more efficiently, reducing the overall cost and environmental impact of the exercise.

If you need assistance with completing or submitting your representation online please call the Customer Service Centre (CSC) on 01506 280000. Please advise the Customer Service Centre that your enquiry relates specifically to the *Local Development Plan* and ask for it to be logged and directed to the Development Planning and Environment Team. Someone will contact you. Alternatively you can email us at wlldp@westlothian.gov.uk We will endeavour to respond as quickly as possible but in any event within three working days of receiving your enquiry.

It is important that all representations are submitted no later than midnight on Sunday 22 November 2015. Representations received after that time will not be considered.

Your comments should be concise, having regard to paragraph 84 of Scottish Government Circular 6/2013: Development Planning which states that representations should be no more than 2,000 words plus any limited supporting productions.

Data Protection Statement

Please be aware that when you make representations on the Proposed Plan through the consultation portal (and/or in a conventional written format) personal information provided as part of a representation cannot be treated as confidential. Representations require to be made available online and for public inspection at the council's office (this would include your name and postal address but would exclude any information which would be subject to the Data Protection Act 1998 i.e. signature, postal address, telephone number, email).

We are also required to pass these details to the Scottish Government's Directorate of Planning and Environmental Appeals (DPEA). This is because they may at a later date wish to invite you to an Examination of the Proposed Plan to discuss your representation. Before using the consultation portal you should also note that any information posted may be subject to disclosure under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002. West Lothian Council will not be liable for any loss or damage arising from or in connection with the disclosure of any information including the disclosure of user generated content.

FOREWORD (page 4)

This introduction by the Leader of the Council establishes the role of the LDP and how it will help deliver the council's core objectives.

BACKGROUND (page 6, paragraphs 1.1-1.5)

Provides a brief historical context to the economic development of West Lothian which helps explain how settlements established and have developed.

CONTEXT (page 7, paragraphs 2.1-2.2)

Provides wider context for the LDP in geographic terms and explains how the LDP fits with the Strategic Development Plan (SDP1).

ROLE AND PURPOSE OF PLAN (page 7, paragraphs 3.1-3.5)

Establishes the role and purpose of the LDP in terms of its being a material consideration in the determination of any planning applications for development in West Lothian and, when adopted by the council, will replace the West Lothian Local Plan. It also sets out what documents the plan must comply with i.e. the Planning etc (Scotland) Act 2006 and what documents will accompany the plan i.e. the Action Programme etc.

VISION STATEMENT AND AIMS (page 8, paragraphs 4.1-4.3)

Establishes the vision for the LDP in terms of outcomes desired over the plan period and identifies the key aims of the plan by individual subject areas i.e. Economic Development & Growth, Community Regeneration, Sustainable Housing Locations, Infrastructure Requirements and Delivery, Town Centres and Retailing, the Natural and Historic Environment, Climate Change and Renewable Energy and Waste and Minerals.

THE SPATIAL STRATEGY (INCLUDING POLICY FRAMEWORK) (page 10, paragraphs 5.1-5.10)

In the context of the Strategic Development Plan (SDP), the LDP identifies West Lothian as being one of thirteen Strategic Development Areas where development will be focused in sustainable locations where infrastructure is either available or can be provided and in locations where there are no environmental constraints.

- **Economic Development and Growth** (page 12, paragraphs 5.11-5.22)
- **Flexibility within traditional industrial estates** (page 14, paragraphs 5.24-5.25)
- **Enterprise Areas** (page 17, paragraphs 5.24-5.25)
- **Local business opportunities, small business start-ups and working from home** (page 17, paragraph 5.26)
- **Tourism** (page 17, paragraphs 5.27-5.28)
- **Promoting community regeneration** (page 19, paragraphs 5.29-5.35)
- **Housing land requirements for the LDP** (page 20, paragraphs 5.36-5.49)
- **Effective Housing Land and Generous Supply** (page 23, paragraphs 5.50-5.53)
- **New Housing Sites and Design** (page 24, paragraphs 5.4-5.56)
- **Strategic Allocations (including previously identified Core Development Area Allocations)** (page 25, paragraphs 5.57-5.61)
- **Whitburn/Charette** (page 26, paragraph 5.62)
- **Linlithgow and Linlithgow Bridge** (page 26-27)
- **Deans South, Livingston; Area for Comprehensive Re-development** (page 27, paragraph 5.68)
- **Affordable Housing** (page 27, paragraphs 5.69-5.74)
- **Accommodation for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Show People** (page 29, paragraph 5.75)
- **Residential Care and Supported Accommodation** (page 29, paragraphs 5.76-5.77)
- **Infrastructure Requirements and Delivery** (page 30, paragraphs 5.78-5.84)
- **Providing for Community Needs** (page 32, paragraphs 5.85-5.88)
- **Education** (page 32, paragraphs 5.89-5.92)
- **Healthcare Provision** (page 33, paragraphs 5.93-5.96)
- **Sports Facilities** (page 33, paragraphs 5.97-5.101)
- **Green Infrastructure and Green Networks** (page 34, paragraphs 5.102-5.105)
- **Water and Drainage** (page 34, paragraphs 5.106-5.107)
- **Travel in and around West Lothian** (page 34, paragraphs 5.108-5.112)
- **Roads** (page 35, paragraph 5.113)

- **A71 Corridor** (page 35, paragraphs 5.114-5.115)
- **A801 Corridor** (page 35, paragraphs 5.116-5.117)
- **A89/A8** (page 35, paragraphs 5.118-5.126)
- **Rail** (page 37, paragraphs 5.127-5.130)
- **Walking and Cycling** (page 37, paragraphs 5.131-5.132)
- **Town Centres and Retailing** (page 39, paragraphs 5.133-5.138)
- **Landscape Character and Local Landscape Designations** (page 41, paragraphs 5.139-5.143)
- **Countryside Belts** (page 42, paragraph 5.144)
- **Development in the Countryside** (page 42, paragraphs 5.145-5.147)
- **Lowland Crofting** (page 44, paragraphs 5.148-5.152)
- **Green Networks, Local Biodiversity Sites and Geodiversity Sites** (page 45, paragraphs 5.153-5.155)
- **Forestry** (page 46, paragraphs 5.156-5.163)
- **Union Canal** (p.49 paragraphs 5.164-5.165)
- **Pentland Hills Regional Park** (page 49, paragraphs 5.164-5.165)
- **Country Parks** (page 50, paragraph 5.169)
- **Allotments/Community Growing** (page 51, paragraphs 5.170-5.171)
- **Temporary/Advance Greening** (page 51, paragraphs 5.172-5.174)
- **Biodiversity** (page 52, paragraphs 5.175-5.180)
- **Geodiversity** (page 53, paragraph 5.181)
- **West Lothian Open Space Strategy** (page 53, paragraphs 5.182-5.184)
- **Historic and Cultural Environment** (page 54, paragraphs 5.185-5.187)
- **Conservation Areas** (page 55, paragraphs 5.185-5.188)
- **Former Bangour Village Hospital, Dechmont** (page 56, paragraph 5.189)
- **Conservation Area at Abercorn/Hopetoun Estate** (page 56, paragraph 5.190)
- **Other Areas of Built Heritage and Townscape Value** (page 57, paragraphs 5.191-5.199)
- **Listed Buildings** (page 58, paragraphs 5.185-5.187)
- **Historic Gardens and Designed Landscapes** (page 59, paragraphs 5.200-5.201)
- **Historic Battlefields** (page 60, paragraph 5.202)
- **Archaeology** (page 60, paragraph 5.203)
- **Scheduled Monuments** (page 60, paragraphs 5.204-5.206)
- **Public Art** (page 61, paragraphs 5.207-5.208)
- **Climate Change Measures** (page 62, paragraphs 5.209-5.214)
- **Low Carbon Development and Renewable Energy** (page 63, paragraphs 5.215-5.221)
- **Wind Farms and Wind Turbines** (page 65, paragraphs 5.222-5.225)
- **Energy and Heat Networks** (page 66, paragraphs 5.226-5.229)
- **Off-gas Grid Areas and Renewable Heat Requirement for New-build Housing** (page 67, paragraphs 5.230-5.232)
- **The Water Environment and Flood Risk Management** (page 67, paragraphs 5.233-5.239)
- **Air Quality and Noise** (page 70, paragraphs 5.240-5.242)
- **Edinburgh Airport** (page 71, paragraph 5.243)
- **Noise** (page 71, paragraph 5.244)
- **Contaminated Land** (page 71, paragraphs 5.245-5.246)
- **Vacant and Derelict Land** (page 72, paragraphs 5.249-5.250)
- **Minerals and Waste** (page 73, paragraphs 5.251-5.256)
- **Site Restoration** (page 75, paragraphs 5.257-5.238)
- **Unconventional Gas Extraction including Hydraulic Fracking** (page 75, paragraph 5.259)
- **Waste** (page 76, paragraph 5.260)

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL BY SETTLEMENT (page 79)

Provides details of development proposals which are supported by the LDP in each town and village across West Lothian and assigns each one a unique reference for ease of identification.

- **Addiewell & Loganlea** (page 79)
- **Armadale** (page 80)
- **Bathgate** (page 81)
- **Blackburn** (page 82)
- **Blackridge** (page 83)
- **Breich** (page 83)
- **Bridgehouse & Bridgecastle** (page 83)
- **Bridgend** (page 83)
- **Broxburn** (page 84)
- **Burnside** (page 84)
- **Dechmont & Bangour** (page 85)
- **East Calder** (page 85)
- **East Whitburn** (page 86)
- **Ecclesmachan** (page 86)
- **Fauldhouse** (page 86)
- **Greenrigg** (page 86)
- **Kirknewton** (page 87)
- **Landward area** (page 87)
- **Linlithgow & Linlithgow Bridge** (page 89)
- **Livingston** (page 90)
- **Longridge** (page 93)
- **Mid Calder** (page 93)
- **Newton and Woodend** (page 93)
- **Philpstoun/East & West Philpstoun/Old Philpstoun** (page 93)
- **Polbeth** (page 93)
- **Pumpherstoun** (page 93)
- **Seafield** (page 93)
- **Stoneyburn/Bents** (page 94)
- **Threemiletown** (page 94)
- **Torphichen** (page 94)
- **Uphall** (page 94)
- **Uphall Station** (page 94)
- **West Calder & Harburn** (page 95)
- **Westfield** (page 95)
- **Whitburn** (page 96)
- **Wilkieston** (page 97)
- **Winchburgh** (page 97)

APPENDICES (page 99)

A number of appendices are included at the end of the LDP which provides additional detail on specific elements of the Proposed Plan.

- **Appendix 1 – Employment Land Allocations** (page 99)
- **Appendix 2 – Schedule of Housing Sites / Site Delivery Requirements** (page 119)
- **Appendix 3 – Schedule of Land Ownership** (page 259)
- **Appendix 4 – LDP Supplementary Guidance (SG) and Planning Guidance (PG)** (page 265)
- **Appendix 5 – List of Policies** (page 273)
- **Appendix 6 – List of Proposals** (page 275)

GLOSSARY (page 280)

An explanation of unfamiliar terms or expressions used in the LDP is provided to assist understanding of the document.

PROPOSALS MAPS

The LDP comprises a series of five maps which define settlement boundaries and illustrate land use zonings.

ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTS

Alongside the LDP is a suite of documents which are required by statute as part of the preparation and supporting evidence for the LDP.

- **Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Environmental Report.**
- **Equalities & Human Rights Impact Assessment (EQHRIA).**
- **Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA).**
- **Habitats Regulations Appraisal.**
- **Transport Appraisal (TA).**
- **Action Programme.**

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Do you wish to submit any additional comments on the LDP?

Thank you for your participation and contribution.

Your details (mandatory)

Please indicate in what capacity you are making this submission:

- as an individual (and representing your own views)
- as a representative of a private or commercial organisation (and representing the views of that organisation)
- as a representative of a public organisation (and representing the views of that organisation)
- as an agent (and making comments on behalf of other individuals that you represent or third parties)
- other

Please complete the following contact information:

Name	<input type="text" value="Bob Salter"/>
Email	<input type="text" value="[REDACTED]"/>
Telephone	<input type="text" value="[REDACTED]"/>
Address	<input type="text" value="[REDACTED]"/>
Organisation name	<input type="text" value="Geddes Consulting"/>
Client's name	<input type="text" value="Wallance Land Investment & Management"/>

Is this the first time you have made a written representation on the Proposed Plan? (mandatory)

- Yes No

If you have previously submitted a site to be considered for development when the council was initially seeking Expressions of Interest (EOI), or commented on the *Local Development Plan* at the *Main Issues Report (MIR)* stage, or made a previous submission to the *Proposed Plan* please provide the reference given to you at that time if known.

EOI & MIR reference number can be found on any email or written communication we may have previously sent you.

Enter EOI (Expression of Interest) reference here	<input type="text" value="0035/0051/0055/0103"/>
Enter MIRQ (<i>Main Issues Report</i>) reference here	<input type="text" value="0184 - 0193"/>

Once form has been completed please sign and date (mandatory)

You do not have to respond to all of the questions set out only those which you feel are of particular relevance to you.

Signature	<input type="text" value="[REDACTED]"/>	Date	<input type="text" value="20th November 2015"/>
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Proposed Plan reference	<input type="text"/>
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Wallace Land – Representations to Proposed Plan Summary of Representations

On behalf of our clients Wallace Land Investment & Management (Wallace Land) we object to a number of policies and proposals in the West Lothian Local Development Plan (LDP) Proposed Plan, as set out below. We also submit three additional sites for allocation in the LDP. These are as follows:

- Wellhead Farm, Murieston
- Pumpherston Farm
- Burghmuir, Linlithgow

A number of supporting documents are included with our representations. These are also detailed below.

EOI/MIR submission references

We made submissions on behalf of Wallace Land in response to the West Lothian LDP Main Issues Report. The reference numbers are as listed below.

- EOI-0035
- EOI-0051
- EOI-0055
- EOI-0103
- MIRQ-0184
- MIRQ-0185
- MIRQ-0186
- MIRQ-0187
- MIRQ-0188
- MIRQ-0189
- MIRQ-0190
- MIRQ-0191
- MIRQ-0192
- MIRQ-0193

The Spatial Strategy (including policy framework)

We object to Policy HOU1: *Allocated Housing Sites* and *Figure 5* of the Proposed Plan on the basis that the Council's proposed development strategy as set out in the LDP Proposed Plan does not comply with the requirements of SESplan or Scottish Ministers, as set out in SPP. The attached *Representation about Policy HOU 1: Allocated Housing Sites and Figure 5* sets out our justification in detail, based on the supporting *Assessment of the Housing Land Supply*.

The supporting *Assessment of the Housing Land Supply* demonstrates that the number of homes to be allocated in the LDP Proposed Plan is 5,568 homes for the period 2009 to 2019. The number of homes to be allocated in the LDP Proposed Plan for the period 2019 to 2024 is 4,459 homes. For the period 2024 to 2027, the Council is required to allocate land for 1,612 homes. Over the entire LDP plan period 2009 to 2027, the Council is required to allocate additional effective housing land with a capacity of 11,639 homes.

Taking account of the programming of proposed allocations set out in the LDP Proposed Plan, which is not agreed by Homes for Scotland, the additional allocations required in the Proposed Plan over and above the proposed allocations already identified in the LDP Proposed Plan is 4,072 homes for the period 2009 to 2019.

The further allocations required in the LDP Proposed Plan for the period 2019 to 2024 is 1,849 homes. For the period 2024 to 2027, the Council requires to allocate further land for 1,612 homes.

In total, additional housing land capable of becoming effective over the plan period from 2009 to 2027 is required to deliver 7,533 homes. The allocation of this scale of additional homes is necessary in order to ensure that the LDP Proposed Plan complies with the housing land requirement in full as required by SESplan.

It is apparent from our *Assessment* that there is still a significant and substantial shortfall in the housing land supply in the first plan period to 2019. This matter has been raised and agreed by Reporters in recent appeal decisions.

The Council's development strategy for the LDP Proposed Plan needs to focus on identifying sufficient effective housing land that can contribute to the effective housing land supply in the short term period to 2019, as well as its plan period to 2027.

The consequence of failing to make these additional allocations is that the Council will not be maintaining a 5 year effective housing land supply from the adoption of the LDP. This will mean that the housing land supply policies in the LDP will be considered out of date in accord with SPP paragraph 125. In these circumstances a presumption in favour of development that contributes to sustainable development will apply through the development management process as set out in SPP paragraphs 29 and 32 to 35.

Accordingly, more land should be allocated to ensure that the LDP accords with the requirements of SESplan and SPP. We recommend the inclusion of three additional sites to help ensure these requirements are met. These sites are detailed below.

We object to the other policies listed below on the basis that they do not allow for the maintenance of an effective housing land supply as required by SESplan and SPP and they include unreasonable demands on development that are contrary to the provisions of Circulars 4/1998 and 3/2012. Separate representations set out changes requested to each policy and the justification for these.

1. HOU1: *Allocated Housing Sites and Figure 5*
2. HOU 2: *Maintaining an Effective Housing Land Supply*
3. HOU 3: *Infill/Windfall Housing Development within Settlements*
4. HOU 4: *Windfall Housing Development in Linlithgow and Linlithgow Bridge*
5. HOU 8: *Healthcare and Community Facilities in New Housing Development*
6. INF 1: *Infrastructure Provision and Developer Obligations*
7. ENV 1: *Landscape character and special landscape areas*
8. ENV 2: *Housing development in the countryside*
9. ENV 4: *Loss of prime agricultural land*
10. ENV 7: *Countryside belts and settlement setting*
11. ENV 8: *Green Network*
12. ENV 11: *Protection of the water environment / coastline and riparian corridors*
13. ENV 18: *Protection of Local and National Nature Conservation Sites*
14. ENV 31: *Historic Battlefields: Battle of Linlithgow Bridge (1526)*
15. ENV 32: *Archaeology*
16. EMG 3: *Sustainable Drainage*

Development proposal by settlement

We promote three development opportunities that should be allocated in whole or part to help ensure the LDP meets the Council's housing requirement, as required by SESplan and Scottish Ministers.

These are listed below:

1. Wellhead Farm, Murieston. This site is proposed for development in three phases for a total of 680 homes plus community hub. Each phase is standalone and the site can be allocated in one, two or all three phases together. The whole site can be built out over the 10-year LDP period.
2. Pumpherston Farm. This site is proposed for a mixed use development incorporating up to 1,230 homes, with community hub, including a new Primary School if required by the Council. Separate phases of development would be delivered in phases of 200-300 homes. This site can be allocated in whole or in part with the potential to deliver 670 homes in Phases 1 to 3 in the LDP period.
3. Burghmuir, Linlithgow. This site is proposed for a phased mixed use development for around 600 homes, new motorway slips, and community facilities including hotel, care home, health centre, and sports provision. The whole site can be built out over the 10-year LDP period. Phase A for around 200 homes is capable of coming forward independently.

A separate *Supporting Statement* has been submitted for each of these three sites. These explain each proposal and its environmental impacts. They provide an updated SEA Site Assessment for each site, taking account of mitigation to be delivered by the proposal. They demonstrate that each of the three sites has acceptable environmental impacts and compares favourably with sites allocated in the Proposed Plan. Each of the sites is suitable for allocation in the LDP. Public consultation for each site is described.

We object to the proposed housing allocations in Linlithgow as listed below on the basis of concerns over the effectiveness of the proposed allocations. This is in terms of a lack of primary school capacity; increased traffic impacts leading to more congestion and further deterioration in air quality. The Council has not proposed infrastructure solutions to deal with these matters which are programmed for delivery. The full justification for these objections is set out within our series of site-specific representations.

- H-LL 4 Land east of Manse Road
- H-LL 7 Clarendon House, 30 Manse Road
- H-LL 10 Clarendon Farm
- H-LL 11 Wilcoxholm Farm / Pilgrims Hill
- H-LL 12 Preston Farm

We also object to the proposed strategic employment allocation at Burghmuir in Linlithgow, reference P-43. This is on the basis that there is no market demand for the proposed use. Further, there is an existing site allocated for this use (E-LL 2) which is currently available for this type of development. It is recommended that the Council modifies the Proposed Plan by allocating land at Burghmuir, Linlithgow for the mixed use development promoted by Wallace Land. The supporting *Representation about Proposal P-43 Burghmuir* sets out the full justification for this objection.

List of supporting documents

The following documents are submitted in support of our representations.

The Spatial Strategy (including policy framework)

1. *Assessment of the Housing Land Supply*
2. *Representation about Policy HOU 1: Allocated Housing Sites and Figure 5*
3. *Representation about Policy HOU 2: Maintaining an Effective Housing Land Supply*
4. *Representation about Policy HOU 3: Infill/Windfall Housing Development within Settlements*
5. *Representation about Policy HOU 4: Windfall Housing Development in Linlithgow and Linlithgow Bridge*
6. *Representation about Policy HOU 8: Healthcare and Community Facilities in New Housing Development*
7. *Representation about Policy INF 1: Infrastructure Provision and Developer Obligations*
8. *Representation about Policy ENV 1: Landscape character and special landscape areas*
9. *Representation about Policy ENV 2: Housing development in the countryside*

10. *Representation about Policy ENV 4: Loss of prime agricultural land*
11. *Representation about Policy ENV 7: Countryside belts and settlement setting*
12. *Representation about Policy ENV 8: Green Network*
13. *Representation about Policy ENV 11: Protection of the water environment / coastline and riparian corridors*
14. *Representation about Policy ENV 18: Protection of Local and National Nature Conservation Sites*
15. *Representation about Policy ENV 31: Historic Battlefields: Battle of Linlithgow Bridge (1526)*
16. *Representation about Policy ENV 32: Archaeology*
17. *Representation about Policy EMG 3: Sustainable Drainage*

Development proposal by settlement

18. *Supporting Statement – Wellhead Farm, Murieston*
19. *Supporting Statement – Pumpherston Farm*
20. *Supporting Statement – Burghmuir, Linlithgow*
21. *Representation about Proposed Allocation Reference H-LL 4*
22. *Representation about Proposed Allocation Reference H-LL 7*
23. *Representation about Proposed Allocation Reference H-LL 10*
24. *Representation about Proposed Allocation Reference H-LL 11*
25. *Representation about Proposed Allocation Reference H-LL 12*
26. *Representation about Proposal P-43 Burghmuir*

Wallace Land – Representations to Proposed Plan Representation about Policy ENV 2

POLICY ENV 2 Housing development in the countryside

Housing development in the countryside will only be permitted where:

- a. the house is required for a full-time worker in agriculture, horticulture, forestry, countryside recreation or tourism or other rural business; or*
- b. the house is required for a retired farmer who wishes to remain on the farm but vacate the existing farmhouse to accommodate his successor; or*
- c. the proposal provides for the restoration of a brownfield site where there is no realistic prospect of it being returned to agriculture or woodland use and the site has no significant natural heritage value in its current condition; or*
- d. the proposal is for the replacement of an existing house in the countryside which is of a poor design or in a poor structural condition; or*
- e. the proposal is for infill development within the curtilage of an existing building group or infilling of gaps between existing houses of a single plot width; or*
- f. the proposal involves the conversion or rehabilitation of existing rural buildings which the council deems worthy of retention because of their architectural or historic merit; or*
- g. the proposal is supported by the council's lowland crofting policy.*

Where a proposal by virtue of its design, location and landscape setting makes an exceptional contribution to the appearance of countryside an exception to policy may be justified.

Proposals should make the best use of resources, integrate with services and facilities and demonstrate the highest standards in design and environmental quality to protect and enhance the established landscape character.

The detailed of Supplementary Guidance on "Development in the Countryside" and "Lowland Crofting" will apply.

Changes requested to the Proposed Plan

We recommend the policy reads as set out below.

POLICY ENV 2 Housing development in the countryside

Housing development in the countryside will only be permitted where:

- a. the house is required for a full-time worker in agriculture, horticulture, forestry, countryside recreation or tourism or other rural business; or*
- b. the house is required for a retired farmer who wishes to remain on the farm but vacate the existing farmhouse to accommodate his successor; or*
- c. the proposal provides for the restoration of a brownfield site where there is no realistic prospect of it being returned to agriculture or woodland use and the site has no significant natural heritage value in its current condition; or*
- d. the proposal is for the replacement of an existing house in the countryside which is of a poor design or in a poor structural condition; or*
- e. the proposal is for infill development within the curtilage of an existing building group or infilling of gaps between existing houses of a single plot width; or*
- f. the proposal involves the conversion or rehabilitation of existing rural buildings which the council deems worthy of retention because of their architectural or historic merit; or*

- g. *the proposal is supported by the council's lowland crofting policy.* or
- h. *it is a suitable site on the edge of a settlement and the development will contribute to the maintenance of a 5 year effective housing land supply, consistent with Policy HOU2.*

Where a proposal by virtue of its design, location and landscape setting makes an exceptional contribution to the appearance of countryside an exception to policy may be justified.

Proposals should make the best use of resources, integrate with services and facilities and demonstrate the highest standards in design and environmental quality to protect and enhance the established landscape character.

The detailed ~~of~~ Supplementary Guidance on "Development in the Countryside" and "Lowland Crofting" will apply where relevant.

Justification

There is a requirement from SPP and SESplan to ensure that the policy framework in a Local Development Plan will continue to maintain a 5 year effective housing land supply over the LDP period.

The Policy as drafted conflicts with proposed Policy HOU2, Policy 7 of the approved SDP, and with SPP (paragraph 29), which all recognise that greenfield sites outwith existing defined settlement boundaries may need to be released in the event of a shortfall in the 5-year effective housing land supply. Such sites will normally constitute 'countryside' in terms of LDP designation. Therefore Policy ENV2 should reflect the potential for the principle of such proposals to be justified in the countryside in these circumstances.

This approach and modification is in accord with the policy requirements of SESplan and SPP.