

Perth and Kinross LDP3 2027- Evidence Report

TOPIC PAPER NO. 009: Green Belt

July 2024



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1 Introduction

This topic paper sets out the key information relating to green belt which will be covered by the Perth and Kinross Local Development Plan 3, as required under the provisions of Section 16B of the Act¹. It will, alongside a range of other topic papers, contribute towards the preparation of the Council's Evidence Report, which is programmed to be submitted to the Scottish Government's Planning and Environmental Appeals Division during November 2024 for the 'Gatecheck' process.

The purpose of an Evidence Report is to provide the local authority's interpretation of the evidence it has gathered and the likely implications of that evidence for the preparation of the LDP. The Report will provide a summary of what the evidence means for the plan, rather than contain all the detail of evidence collected.

1.1 Relevant Policies

This topic is covered by the following policies in National Planning Framework 4:

- Policy 8: Green Belt

1.2 Legal and National Policy Requirements / Expectations

In line with the requirement of the Act, this paper will provide important background information for the Plan area regarding:

- the principal physical and environmental characteristics of the district

Under this policy NPF4 expects LDPs to:

- consider using green belts, to support their spatial strategy as a settlement management tool to restrict development around towns and cities
- identify or review green belts as part of the preparation of LDPs, detailed green belt boundaries should be based on evidence and should be clearly identified in plans

¹ The Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended by the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019

1.3 Perth and Kinross Council Corporate Plan 2022-2027

This topic paper links to the following priorities from the Corporate Plan:

- tackling climate change and supporting sustainable places,
- developing a resilient, stronger and greener local economy, and
- working in partnership with communities.

There is a particular need to consider how the LDP can contribute to the following key action from the stronger and greener economy priority:

- Support and promote business growth, business and place innovation and investment in both our urban and rural areas

1.4 Abbreviations used in this topic paper

CTLR	Cross Tay Link Road
LDP	Local Development Plan
LLA	Local Landscape Area
NPF	National Planning Framework
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment

1.5 Data links

Links to data	Relevance of data and why it is required to inform the Proposed Plan
Perth and Kinross Structure Plan Written Statement June 2003	Strategic land use planning guidance which for the first time designated a green belt in Perth and Kinross.
David Tyldesley and Associates Perth Green Belt Study June 2000	Study carried out to evaluate the case for a green belt for Perth as means of formalising the development strategy.
LDP 1 Examination Report: Policy NE5 Green Belt	Extract from the Examination into LDP1 which considers green belt boundary issues.
LDP2 SEA – Addendum to the Environmental Report Dec 2017	Assessed the proposed green belt boundary changes identified in the Proposed LPD1 (p.124)
LDP2 Examination Report: Policy 41 Green Belt	Extract from the Examination into LDP2 which considers green belt boundary issues.
LDP2	Sets out Green Belt policy (policy 43) and map of the Green Belt area (p.77)
Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Survey 2022	Quantitative data on vacant and derelict land in Perth and Kinross collected annually.
NatureScot National Landscape Character Assessment	Identified Scottish landscape character types.
LDP2 Landscape Supplementary Guidance 2020	Identified a series of Local Landscape Areas across Perth and Kinross one of which partly overlaps with the green belt boundary in LDP2.

2 Information Analysis

Policy 8 Green belts is one of the more detailed policies in the NPF and is intended to ‘encourage, promote and facilitate compact urban growth and use the land around our towns and cities sustainably.’

NPF policy 8 outcomes are that:

- 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.

This section sets out the evidence which is needed so that the Proposed Plan can address the issues raised in the Act and in NPF4 and identifies any gaps or uncertainties in the evidence.

2.1 Establishing a Green Belt around Perth

The green belt in Perth and Kinross was first designated in the Perth and Kinross Structure Plan 2003. This Plan instructed the Perth Area Local Plan to define in detail the inner and outer boundaries of the green belt based on the need to:

- Allow for long term expansion to the west along the A85 corridor for business uses

- Sustain the existing separation and identity of Scone
- Provide village envelopes around Aberdargie, Almondbank, Glencarse, Kinfauns / Walnut Grove, Pitcairngreen, Rhynd and Scone to accommodate planned development
- Accommodate long term growth to the north west
- Ensure that any developments which are permitted demonstrate a significant environmental enhancement within the Green Belt

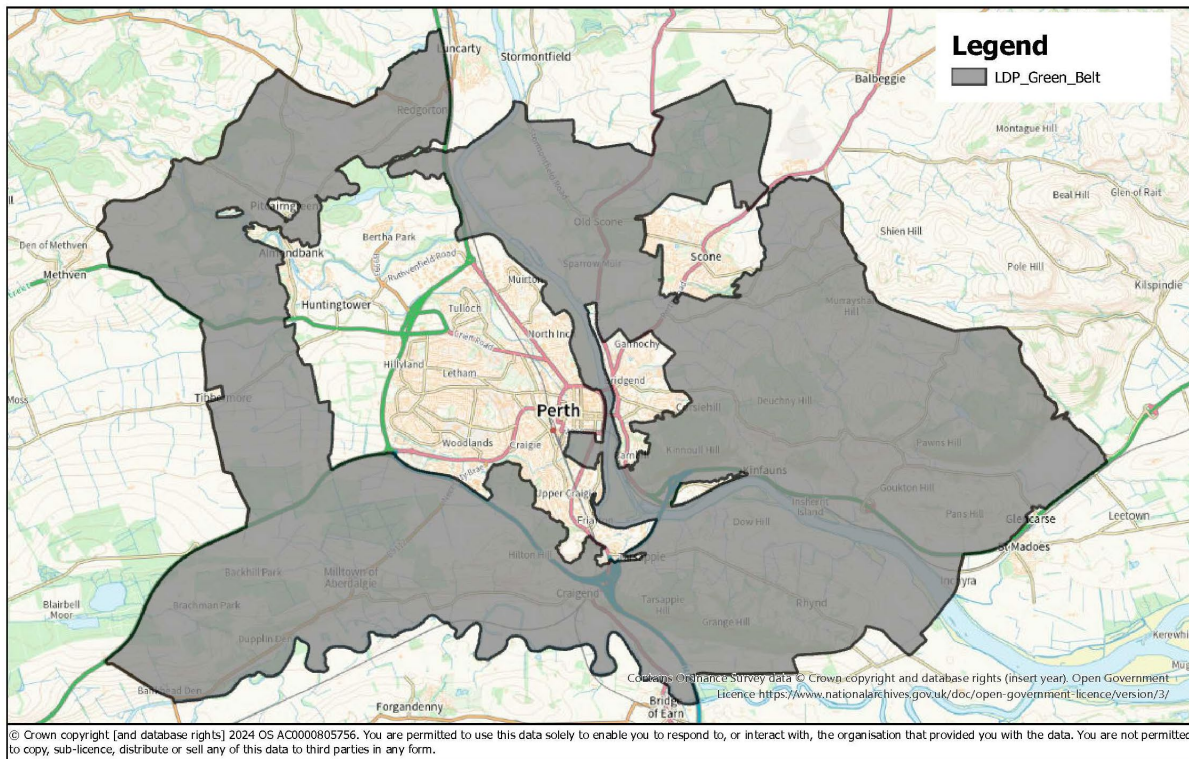
These criteria were informed by the Perth Green Belt Study in June 2000 which concluded that there was a strong case for establishing a Green Belt around Perth.

This need for a green belt was continued in the first TAYplan Strategic Development Plan and the detailed boundaries were first identified in LDP1 (which superseded the Perth Area Local Plan). The LDP1 Examination Reporter concluded that:

- The proposed green belt boundary allowed for very significant strategic releases to the west and north west of Perth which were intended to satisfy most of the City’s requirements for housing land and make a significant contribution towards other development needs within the Plan period and beyond.
- In addition to site allocations, significant land was to be excluded from the green belt where smaller scale development might be permitted or where the need for further allocations could be considered in a subsequent plan.

- In other settlements, such as Scone and Luncarty, the proposed boundary was drawn to offer potential for significant settlement expansion during the Plan period and potential for further growth beyond that.
- There was no evidence that the inner boundary had been drawn too tightly or that it would encourage development that should take place in Perth to do so in inappropriate locations beyond the outer green belt boundary.
- The green belt boundaries proposed were consistent with the then Strategic Development Plan and accorded with the purposes of green belt designation set out in Scottish Planning Policy which was the precursor to NPF4.
- Generally, the proposed boundaries followed clearly identifiable features which were likely to endure in the long term although the boundary was less distinct along the western edge and the Perth West development site.

LDP1 Green belt boundary

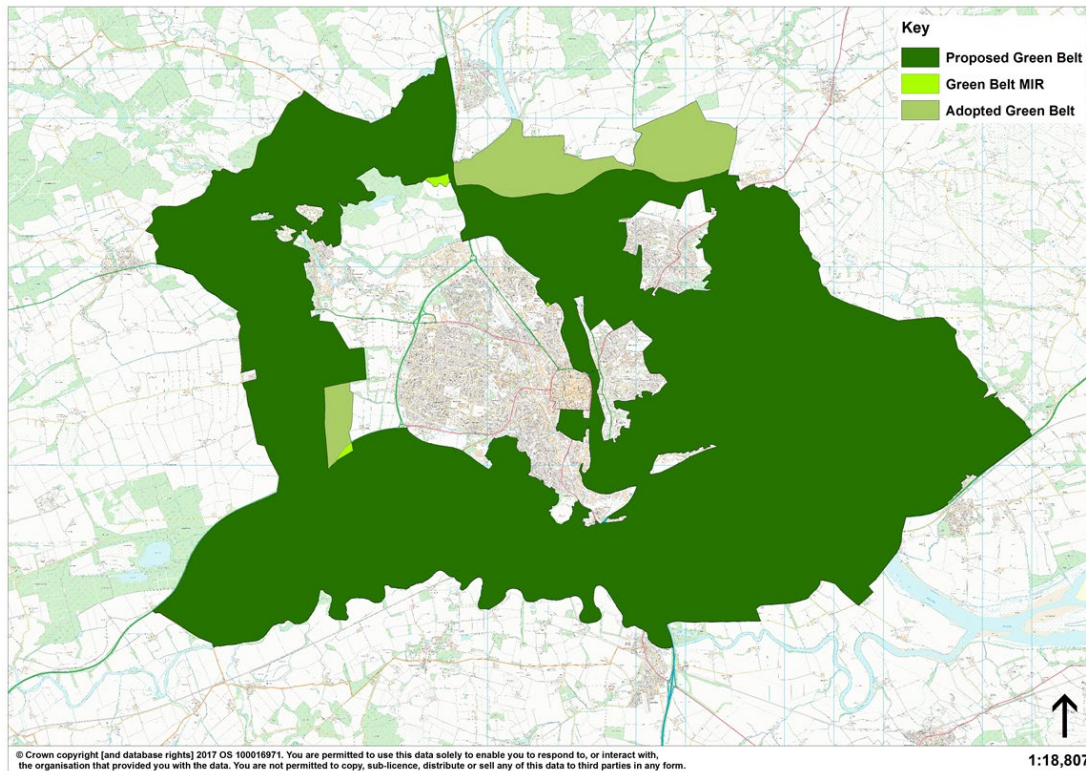


2.2 Green Belt Boundary Changes through LDP2

A number of changes to the green belt boundary were considered through the preparation of LDP2. These changes were assessed through the SEA process which concluded that the preferred alternative was one which made two key changes in the boundary at Perth West and the North of Scone.

At Perth West the boundary change was to follow the proposed Perth City settlement boundary which would make the green belt boundary more robust following the edge of the Lamberkine woodland block. To the north of Scone, the change was to allow for a rationalised boundary which followed the route of the Cross Tay Link Road (CTLR). A number of additions were also proposed to the boundary in order to fill in existing gaps which would contribute to limiting urban sprawl and framing the settlement boundaries more clearly.

Preferred alternative green belt boundary identified in LDP2 SEA

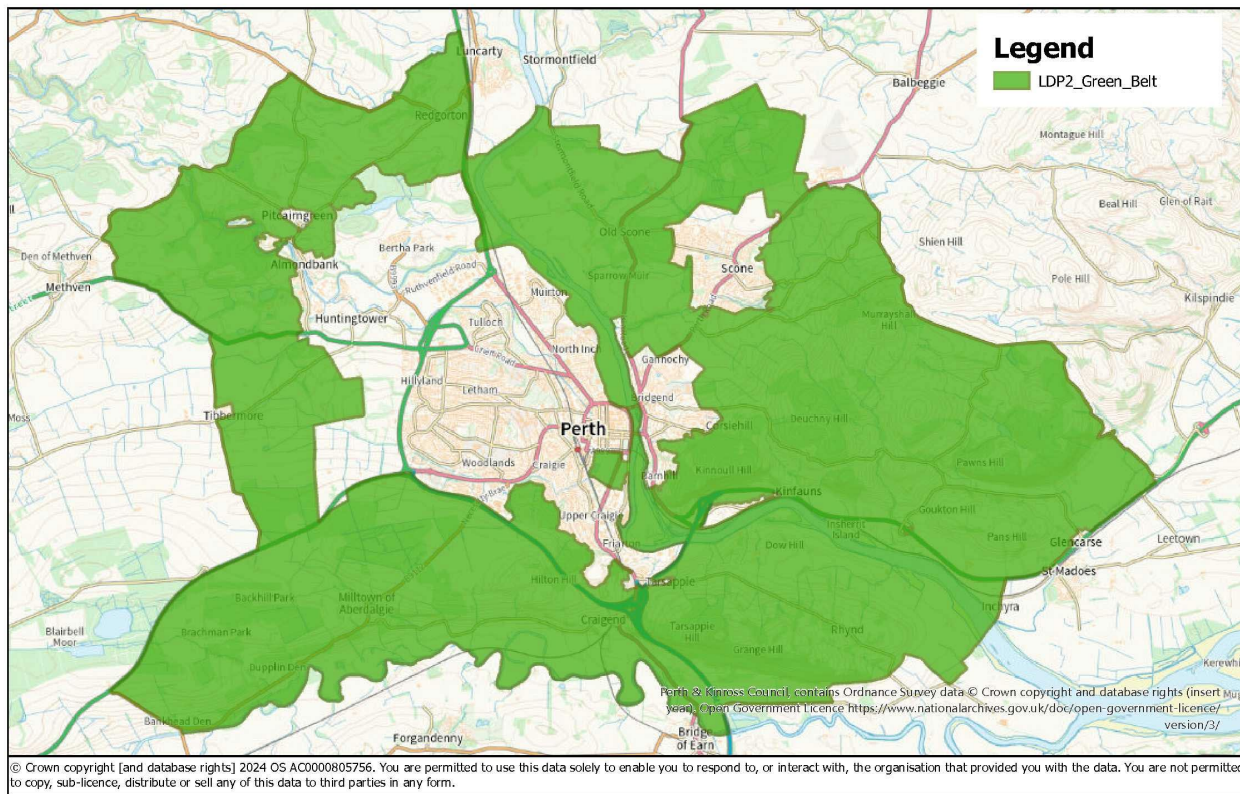


Source: LDP2 SEA – note, this included changes which had been proposed through the Main Issues Report (MIR)

Whilst most of the proposed changes were agreed by full Council, it was ultimately decided to retain the original LDP1 boundary to the North of Scone rather than amend it to follow the CTRLR route. The Council considered it was important to retain the existing boundary in this location to provide assurance to the public that the green belt is a fixed approach to land management around Perth and that changes to it are only made to reflect long term strategies within the LDP. It was acknowledged, however, that once built the CTRLR

would be a permanent boundary in comparison to the existing boundary in LDP1 which was delineated by commercial woodland. This approach was agreed and confirmed by the LDP2 Examination Reporter who concluded that ‘there should be no change to the green belt boundary [to the North of Scone] in the proposed plan at present, particularly as the CTRLR has yet to be completed’.

LDP2 Green belt boundary



2.3 Review of Green Belt Boundary

In carrying out a green belt review or study, Scottish Government Local Development Planning Guidance suggests the issues which planning authorities may wish to consider to inform any extension or review of precise green belt boundaries, or the removal of land from the green belt. These are considered below.

Existing major uses

The Guidance suggests identifying any existing settlements, major education and research uses, major businesses and industrial operations, airports and Ministry of Defence establishments, and any other significant areas of brownfield, vacant and derelict land within the current green belt boundary.

As highlighted in section 2.1 above, the existing green belt boundary was drawn to take account of existing villages and towns and their relationship with Perth city and there are no changes to any of the other uses listed. In relation to brownfield, vacant and derelict land, the most up to date Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Survey dates from 2022. For the preparation of the Proposed Plan the most up to date survey data will be used.

Settlement boundaries

Reviewing existing settlement boundaries allows the identification of any required boundary changes as a result of development having taken place. This will be carried out as part of the Settlement Audit for the Plan area. This exercise has not yet been carried out and this is identified as a gap in evidence.

In addition, the Council carried out its 'Big Place Conversation' exercise to kick start the LDP3 process across Perth and Kinross communities during most of 2023. This was a significant exercise involving over 100 events throughout the Council area. The events ranged from drop-in information sessions, meetings, and online surveys to workshops and online sessions using the Place Standard Tool to capture the views of local communities about different aspects of their places. There were also targeted sessions held with schools, service user groups, and minority groups. The results of the Big Place Conversation exercise for those settlements within the green belt boundary may also help identify where changes in settlement boundaries have occurred or changes should be made to the green belt boundary.

Landscape Character Assessment

The landscape character types in Perth and Kinross as defined by NatureScot in their National Landscape Character Assessment are set out in The Plan Area Topic Paper. In addition, LDP2 supplementary guidance on Landscape identified 11 Local Landscape Areas across Perth and Kinross. One of these, the Sidlaw Hills LLA partly overlaps with the green belt boundary. The supplementary guidance identifies the special qualities and forces for change in this LLA and identifies objectives going forward. It is being considered whether there is scope for carrying out a further review of LLAs in advance of the preparation of the proposed plan.

Clearly identifiable visual boundary markers

As noted in section 2.1 above, the LDP1 Examination Reporter found that the green belt boundaries which were originally proposed followed clearly identifiable features. The only point of

concern at that time was that the boundary was less distinct along the western edge and the Perth West development site. This issue was resolved in the boundary changes through LDP2 to reduce the green belt area to create the Perth West development site. The Reporter noted that ‘the proposed green belt boundary which follows a field boundary near Blackruthven Farm in the proposed plan would eventually be made more robust though additional planting as part of [the] allocation’.

[The green belt’s contribution to NPF4’s policy outcomes](#)

The Local Development Planning Guidance suggests that consideration should be given to the contribution the green belt can make to NPF’s Green Belts policy outcomes that:

- Development is directed to the right locations, urban density is increased and unsustainable growth is prevented.
- The character, landscape, natural setting and identity of settlement is protected and enhanced.
- Nature networks are supported and land is managed to help tackle climate change.

The first two of these are well established criteria for designating green belts. The new emphasis on supporting nature networks and helping tackle climate change reflect the increased priority in NPF4 to tackling the climate and nature crises as highlighted in NPF policy 1. In this there are linkages with the Tackling the Climate and Nature Crises Topic Paper.

2.4 Gaps or Uncertainties in Data

[Settlement boundary review](#)

A review of settlement boundaries will be carried out through the Settlement Audit work to inform the preparation of the Proposed Plan. This will include an assessment of planning applications to identify any necessary changes to the green belt boundary.

[Perth and Kinross Big Place Conversation](#)

The results of the Big Place Conversation will be summarised as part of a separate report on the outcomes and findings across the different locality areas. This summary of the results, and the identified place-based actions to be taken forward as part of the development of the Proposed Plan, will be provided as part of LDP3’s Evidence Report under the required statement of steps taken by the Council in preparing the report to seek the views of various stakeholders, as prescribed by the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019.

3 Implications for Proposed Plan

The key implication for the Proposed Plan is that the spatial strategy will need to consider whether there is need to release from the green belt any large-scale areas of land for planned growth. This will be informed by the finalised Local Housing Land Requirement and Employment Land Strategy for the Proposed Plan which will in turn be informed by the NPF4 spatial principles. Of particular relevance will be the principles of local living, compact urban growth, rebalanced development, and rural revitalisation.

4 Stakeholder Engagement

Feedback is sought on this Topic Paper on whether stakeholders and other interested parties agree with evidence which we intend to use to prepare the Proposed Plan as set out above.