



# OCT 2019

GREEN BELT LANDSCAPE CHARACTER  
ASSESSMENT BACKGROUND REPORT (BR2)

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL



Strategic  
Services





## How can I find out more and submit my comments on the Proposed Local Development Plan 2 (LDP2)?

We think it is important to provide a range of ways for you to find out about the Proposed Plan, what it means for you and how you can submit your comments to us. You can keep up-to-date with the LDP progress via the Council's website.

The consultation period will run for **8 weeks until 13<sup>th</sup> December 2019**. You can access information on the Proposed Plan:

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<p><b>Drop in Session</b></p>  <p>Details to follow - See posters and leaflets in community halls, local notice boards, newspapers and online</p>	<p><b>Story Map</b></p>  <p><a href="https://arcg.is/18fi4u">https://arcg.is/18fi4u</a></p>												

For ease of use we would encourage you to submit responses electronically where possible.

### You can comment on the Proposed Plan by:

Going online and completing our online representation form.

[www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/ldp2](http://www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/ldp2)

Download a representation form in Word, complete it and email it to:

[ldp@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk](mailto:ldp@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk)

OR

Print your completed representation form and post it to:

Strategy Team  
Council Offices  
2 Spiersbridge Way  
Spiersbridge Business Park  
Thornliebank, G46 8NG

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This Background Report forms part of the evidence base for the Proposed Local Development Plan 2 (LDP2). It includes information on the landscape character of East Renfrewshire and provides a summary of the key landscape features and characteristics for each settlement.

## CONTEXT

The majority of the landscape within East Renfrewshire is designated as green belt. This is in recognition of the importance and inherent sensitivity of this landscape as a setting for the urban area. It comprises a range of land uses including farmland, woodland and water bodies. In addition, it forms part of the green network and provides significant recreational opportunities including Dams to Darnley Country Park, Rouken Glen Park, access routes and golf courses.

The East Renfrewshire Local Development Plan (LDP1) was adopted in June 2015 and was informed by the 2005 Green Belt Landscape Character Assessment. A review of the boundary was undertaken which provided opportunities for significant new development through Strategic Development Opportunities but also put in place a robust and defensible green belt boundary.

The Proposed LDP2 promotes a compact strategy of consolidation and regeneration of existing places and communities, with a focus on brownfield and vacant sites. The Proposed Plan carries forward development opportunities identified in LDP1 but does not propose any new housing sites or development which will impact upon the green belt landscape character.

A range of Policies contained within the Proposed Plan seek the protection of the green belt and countryside around towns, green network, natural features and recreational opportunities.

An updated Green Belt and Landscape Character Assessment was undertaken in 2016 and has informed the Strategy and green belt boundary for the Proposed LDP2. The key aspects of this are summarised in the remainder of this Background Report in tables (1-3) and figures (1-3).



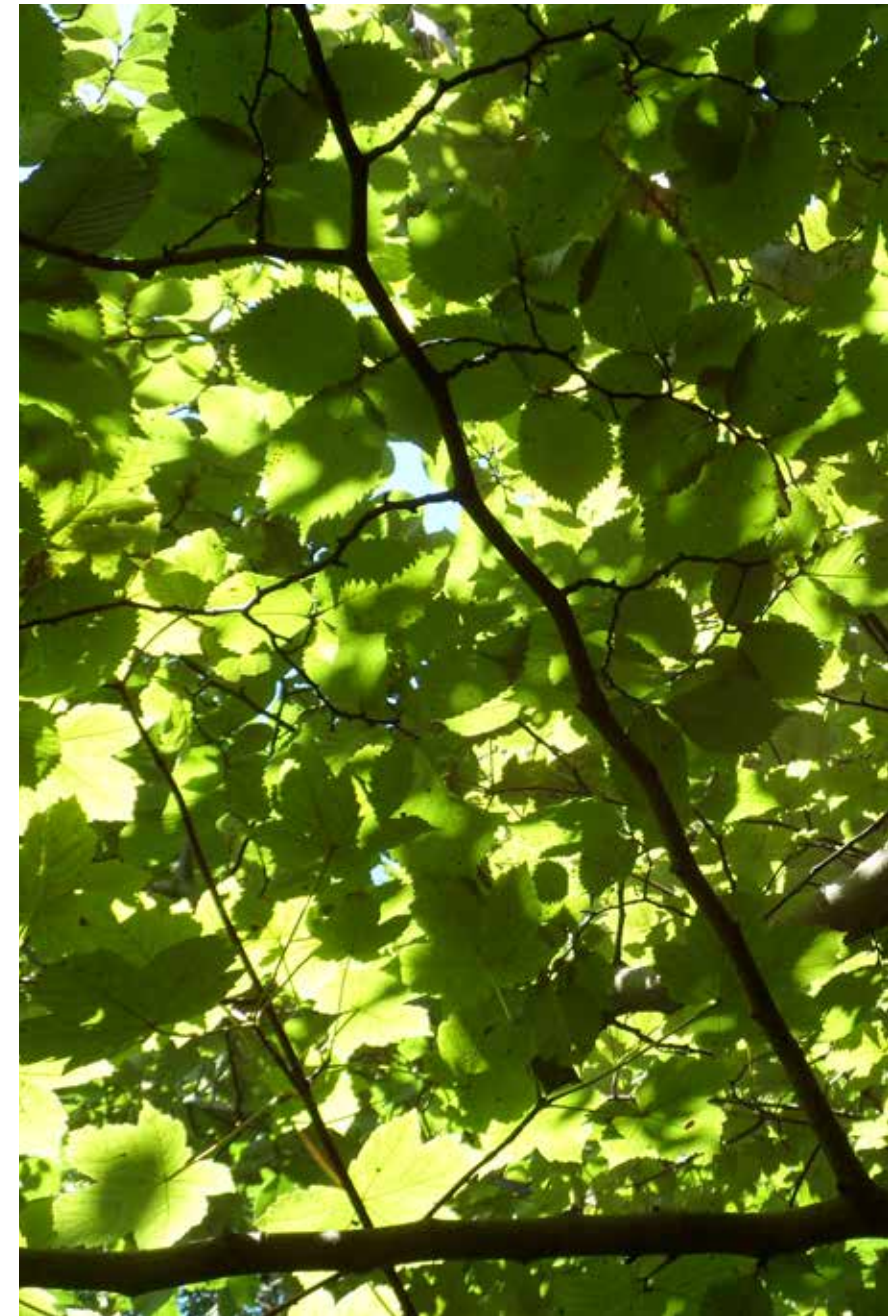
## GREEN BELT LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT (November 2016)

### Green Belt Landscape Character Assessment

A review of the 2005 Green Belt Landscape Character Assessment was undertaken in 2016.

The report retains the format and sections of the original document and provides updated information where required and includes some additional sections:

- Amendments to the landscape character area descriptions to reflect new development since 2005, including green belt release;
- Minor changes to the evaluation framework of landscape character areas against green belt objectives to reflect the updated policy framework since 2005;
- Revised and updated text on the existing inner green belt boundaries, including categorisation of features, definition, strength and robustness;
- Settlement based descriptions of the key features and characteristics that define the landscape setting of the settlements and urban areas of East Renfrewshire and their importance;
- Collation of the assessment values for landscape sensitivity, visual sensitivity, landscape value, and the combined effect of these factors;
- Identification and discussion of the visual quality of key gateways into and out of the urban area;
- Identification of areas with opportunity and constraints for development in landscape terms;
- Consideration of the potential cumulative impact of development on the landscape and settlements;
- Recommendations on measures for improving the defensibility of the green belt boundary and landscape setting of settlements; and
- Recommendations for improving accessibility to the green belt and the green network.



## Landscape Character

A number of visual gateways were identified within East Renfrewshire which highlight the movement from one type of landscape to another such as from urban to rural, or from upland to lowland.

Gateways which are particularly pronounced are those which highlight a transition in more than one aspect such as from urban to rural and upland to lowland, and as such are key features in signifying arrival at a certain place or landscape and are important in contributing to first impressions of a settlement or landscape.

Identifying and maintaining the clarity of the steps in separating areas of settlement is of paramount importance to the setting of the urban areas and individual settlements. This also provides opportunities for reinforcing the strong visual interrelationships between the urban and rural landscape and between settlements.



## Landscape Evaluation

The landscape of the green belt has been evaluated to inform the assessment of sensitivity in terms of opportunities and constraints for development. The following tables and figures identify the three main classifications for evaluation namely: Landscape Sensitivity (Table 1 and Figure 1), Visual Sensitivity (Table 2 and Figure 2) and Green Belt Sensitivity (Table 3 and Figure 3).



**Table 1: Landscape Sensitivity Criteria**

<b>Landscape Sensitivity</b> <i>Scored in terms of High, Medium to High, Medium, Low to Medium, or Low.</i>	Overall classification of the inherent sensitivity of the landscape resource in terms of landscape character as a whole and individual elements contributing to character, considering the robustness of the landscape and the extent to which it can accommodate change without adverse impacts on character.
Strength of Typical Character	The individual elements that contribute to character, their significance and their vulnerability to change.
Condition/Intactness	The overall quality and condition of the landscape in terms of its intactness, representation of typical character and condition or state of repair of individual elements contributing to character.
Scenic qualities	Landscape experience discussing attributes such as the scale, level of enclosure, diversity, colour, form, line, pattern and texture of the landscape.

Source: Table 4.1 LCA (2016)

**Table 2: Visual Sensitivity Criteria**

<b>Visual Sensitivity</b> <i>Scored in terms of High, Medium to High, Medium, Low to Medium, or Low.</i>	Overall classification of the inherent sensitivity of the visual resource in terms of the views within the character area, and the intervisibility of the character area within the wider rural and urban landscapes.
General Visibility	Primarily a function of the landform and presence of potentially screening land cover, especially trees and woodland.
Population	Numbers and types of people who are likely to perceive the landscape and any changes occurring within it.
Mitigation Potential	The potential scope to mitigate the visual effects of any change that might take place, using appropriate methods. (Therefore the scoring system here is actually the converse in meaning to the above criteria, with a score rated 'High' indicating reduced visual sensitivity and a greater scope for landscape mitigation to create a landscape that could support development). For example in an historic landscape the visual sensitivity may be High due to the strong lines of trees, but the mitigation potential may be Low as it would be difficult to replace mature tree lines that are of historical importance. This aspect has been taken into consideration in the evaluation of visual sensitivity.

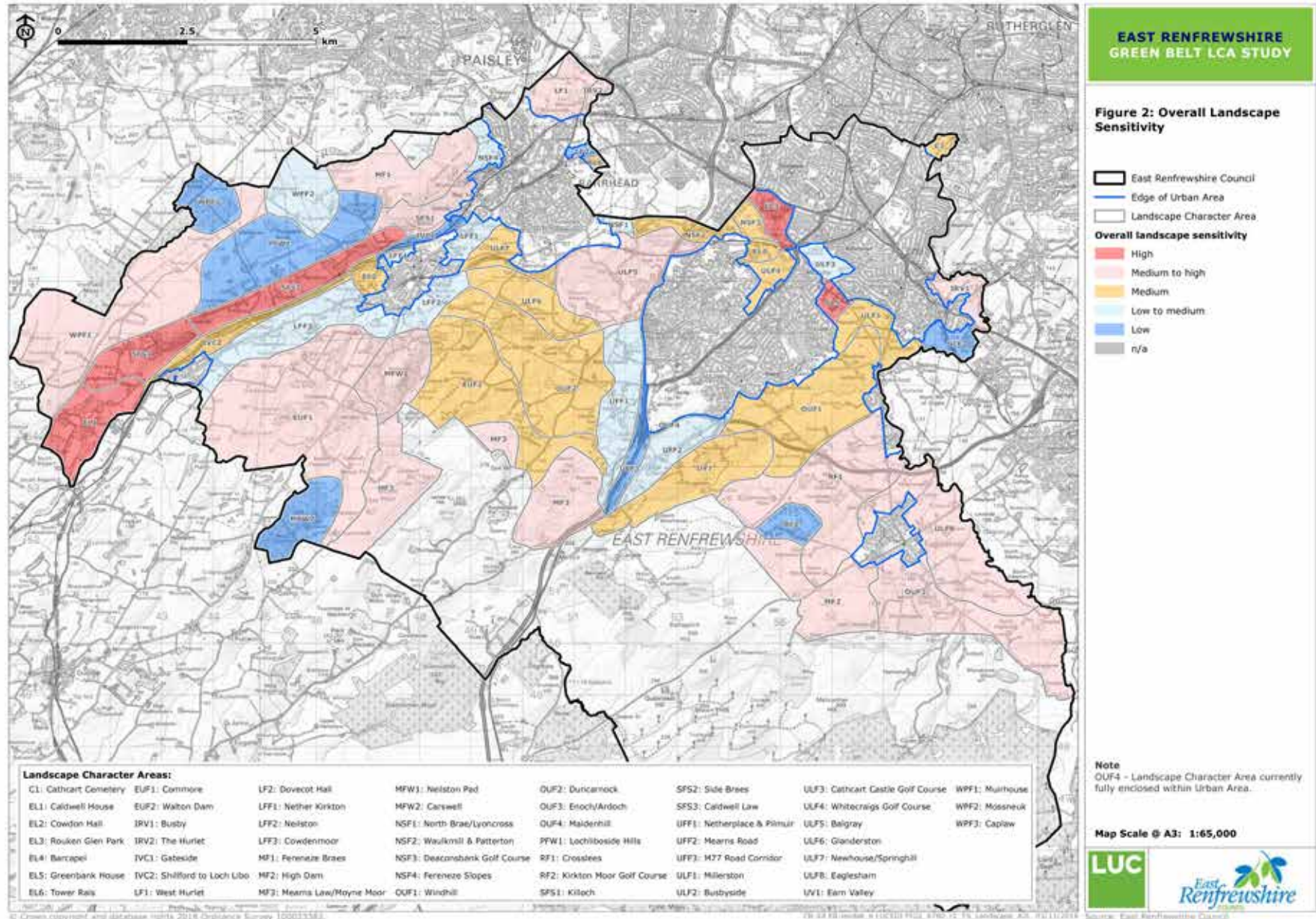
Source: Table 4.2 LCA (2016)

**Table 3: Revised Green Belt Criteria**

<i>Primary criteria</i>	<i>Secondary criteria</i>	<i>2005 report Green Belt criteria</i>
Greenbelt criteria scored in terms of Strong, Moderate to Strong, Moderate, Weak to Moderate or Weak		
Role in protecting and enhancing character of the settlement	What is the relationship between the scale and form of the settlement and the landscape, landscape patterns and landscape features? How important is the LCA to the character of the settlement? (score)	Provision of containment
Role in protecting and enhancing the landscape setting of the settlement	How important is the visual relationship between the LCA and the settlement? (score)	Contribution to settlement setting
Role in protecting and enhancing the identity of the settlement	How important is the LCA in preventing coalescence? (score)	Clarity of separation
	How important is the LCA in providing strong gateways to the settlement, particularly in relation to transport routes? (score)	
	What are the inner greenbelt boundaries composed of, and how robust are these? (score) What opportunities are there for enhancing the boundary to increase robustness?	Robustness of boundaries
Role in protecting and providing access to open space.	How important is the LCA in providing recreational open space or access routes? (score) What opportunities are there to increase accessibility of the Greenbelt?	Contribution to Green Corridors

Source: Table 4.3 LCA (2016)

Figure 1: Overall Landscape Sensitivity



Source: Figure 2 LCA (2016)

Figure 2: Overall Visual Sensitivity

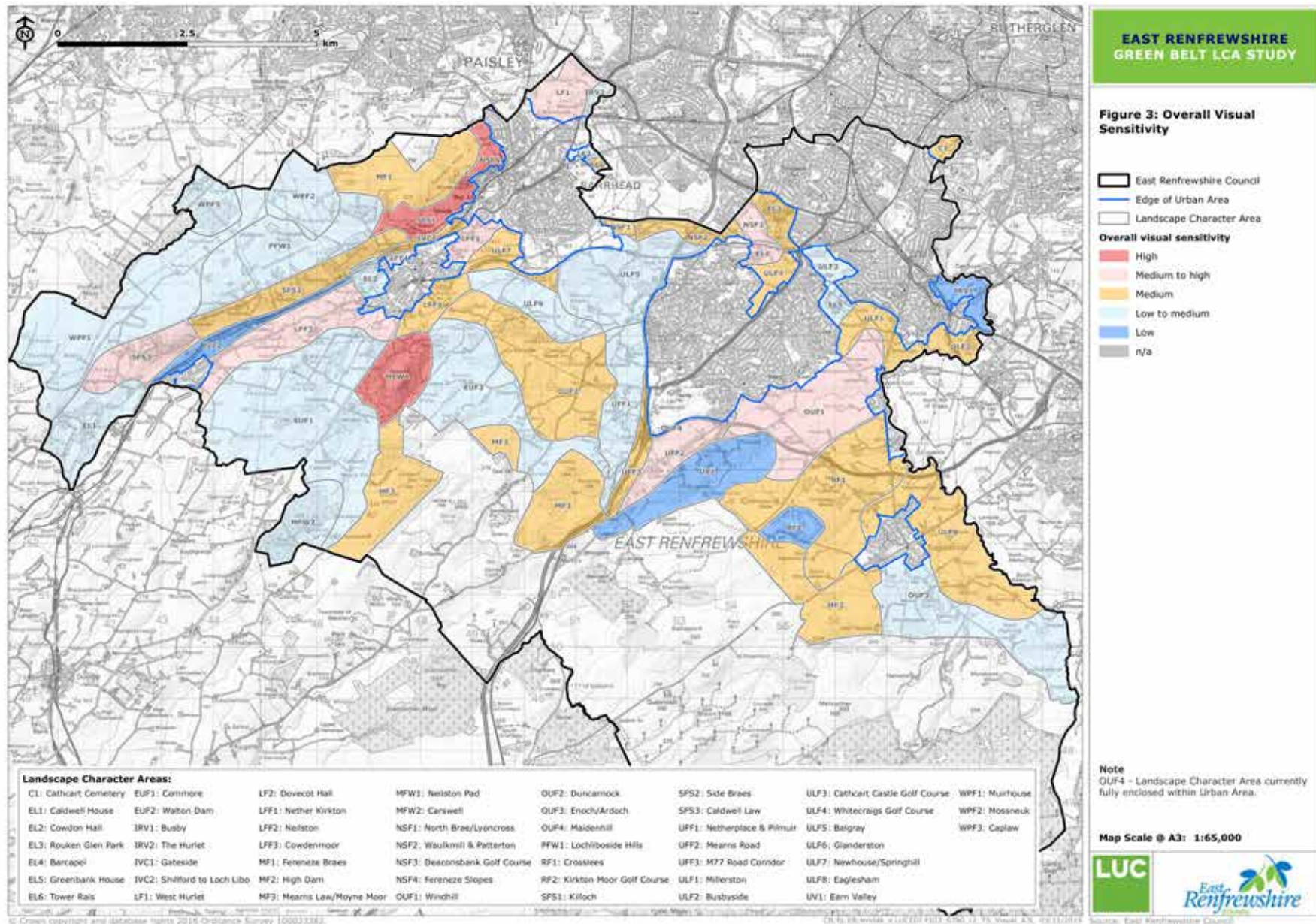
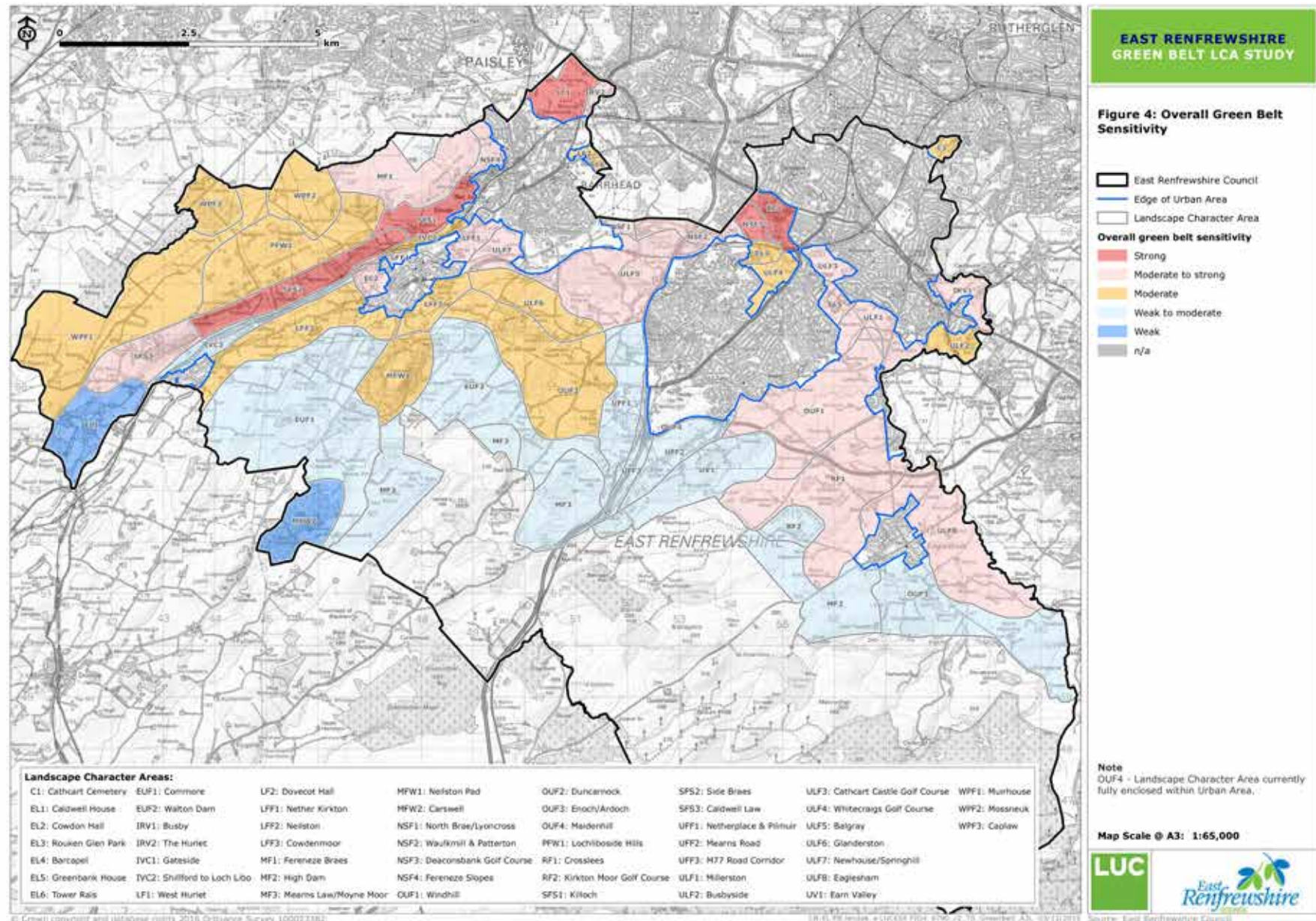


Figure 3: Overall Greenbelt Sensitivity



Source: Figure 4 LCA (2016)

## Area Summaries

The LCA sets out a summary for each settlement setting out the key features and characteristics of its landscape context.

**Table 4: Settlement Summaries**

<i>Location</i>	<i>Settlement Summaries</i>
Barrhead North	The northern edge of Barrhead is influenced by the long views from the Grahamston Road and the rising land at St Conval's cemetery. This landscape area plays a key role in providing separation with Glasgow to the north and as part of a wider network of green space between the settlements.
Barrhead East	The eastern boundary is formed by the Levern Water, the local authority boundary and the new settlement boundary. As such it is relatively constrained in landscape terms, as the new settlement boundary extends east onto the north facing slopes at Dams to Darnley Country Park.
Barrhead South	The full extent of this settlement edge is defined by the railway line which provides a robust physical feature between the settlement and the rising ground to the south.
Barrhead West	In landscape terms the western edge of the settlement is constrained by the steepness of the slopes and the prominence of development beyond the existing settlement boundary. To the south in the valley landscape development would result in visual coalescence between the new development within the new settlement at Neilston and any development to the north.
Busby	To the east of Busby the incised valley landform provides physical and perceptual separation between Busby and Carmunnock, and has a strong rural character. To the south of Busby the boundary edge for the settlement which extends alongside the White Cart Water is delineated by a thick tree belt which reinforces the form of the watercourse. Parts of the settlement edge are weaker to the immediate east of the railway, but become more robust closer to East Kilbride Road where they are reinforced by woodland. Views into the landscape area from the East Kilbride Road are limited by the rise of the landform before it drops into the valley, however this area is perceived from the railway, where the undulating lowland farmland forms part of the landscape providing separation between Busby and Thorntonhall.
Clarkston	The boundary edge at Williamwood High School is formed by a belt of maturing trees and the landscape to the south of this area is strongly constrained in landscape terms by its role in providing physical and perceptual separation between Clarkston and Waterfoot. Between the B767 and High Flenders Road the settlement boundary is relatively weak, being formed by rear gardens and field boundaries. However the settlement boundary also adjoins a small scale shallow valley which provides a change in slope and aspect to the south, effectively providing a clear landscape change from the settlement edge. This would mean development beyond this would relate poorly to the existing settlement. The landscape area also forms part of a larger green wedge which extends between Clarkston and Newton Mearns, providing separation between the two areas.

<i>Location</i>	Settlement Summaries
Eaglesham	<p>To the north of Eaglesham the distance to the GSO and beyond to Waterfoot is relatively short, and the landscape here is significant in maintaining the physical and perceptual separation of the two settlements.</p> <p>To the south and east adjacent to Strathaven Road the settlement boundary is weak and would benefit from enhancement. Although landform does not provide a natural boundary edge and there is no alternative existing landscape feature which could form an alternative boundary. Small scale development could be accommodated in this area. A new settlement edge which was aligned with the settlement edge to the west of Strathaven Road would enhance the southern boundary of the settlement. Potential landscape capacity for development was identified to the south of Holehouse Road extending to the Eaglesham Burn. Development within this area would be contained within the existing settlement form as it extends to the north east. Riparian enhancement along the route of Eaglesham Burn could be implemented to form a new settlement edge.</p>
Neilston	<p>To the north east of the settlement, LFF1 Nether Kirkton plays a significant role in the visual and physical separation of Neilston and Barrhead and is sensitive to development which reduces this gap. To the south, the landform rises and becomes more complex, making this area more visually sensitive to development. There are potentially small scale opportunities for infill development at the settlement edge.</p>
Newton Mearns North	<p>Part of the northern boundary is formed by the strong feature of the railway line, and to the north of this, a low rise further contains the visibility of the settlement edge. Beyond, the north facing slopes at Patterton are relatively prominent, although the Park and Ride facility introduces urban elements into the landscape. The new housing development at Patterton is contained by the woodland and landform which surround the settlement lying within the shallow south facing slopes. South of Barcapel, woodland boundaries are a feature of the landscape pattern and settlement edge, and reduce the overall visibility of this landscape and small scale development could potentially be accommodated in some locations, within the shallow valley landform of the Auldhouse Burn.</p>
Newton Mearns East	<p>The settlement edge adjoins an area which forms an important green wedge extending into the settlement and providing separation between Newton Mearns and Clarkston. The landscape also provides the setting for Greenbank Garden, although this is largely defined by the peripheral tree planting.</p>
Newton Mearns South	<p>The A726 provides a strong boundary feature. To the east of this, the landform undulates and falls towards the shallow valley of the Earn Water, which is an indistinct landscape feature within the varied landform. Small pockets on the settlement edge may be able to accommodate development in landscape terms, however there is a lack of clear alternative boundary features which could form a new settlement boundary.</p>
Newton Mearns West	<p>The entirety of the settlement boundary is defined by the M77 motorway which forms a robust boundary.</p>
Thornliebank/ Williamwood	<p>The settlement edge for this area is constrained in landscape terms by the important landscape feature of Rouken Glen Park. Cathcart Castle Golf club forms part of a relatively narrow landscape providing physical separation between Newton Mearns and Williamwood. The low hills to north of Flenders Farm provide a natural edge to the settlement at Clarkston, along with the rising ground to the south.</p>

<i>Location</i>	Settlement Summaries
Uplawmoor	The settlement of Uplawmoor is located above the steep valley sides to the north west, and bounded by the dismantled railway and shallow valley of the Cast Burn to the east. To the south the wooded course of the Pollick Burn also provides a robust boundary feature. The settlement edge is constrained by landform, watercourses and woodland.
Waterfoot	<p>To the south of Waterfoot the separation with Eaglesham is particularly relevant in relation to the prominent southern boundary of Waterfoot, and the significant urban influences of the roundabout and GSO. These features have the effect of reducing the perceptual separation between the two settlements.</p> <p>In the south of the settlement, the western boundary of Waterfoot along the B767 is clearly delineated by the estate wall, which enhances the perception of Waterfoot as a linear settlement. The northern area of Waterfoot north of Floors Road does not follow the linear settlement pattern, extending out to the west. However this area is located within the broader landform of the valley of the White Cart Water. Development to the west of the existing settlement would begin to rise up from the constraining edge of the valley landform, affecting the perception of the settlement form.</p>





## LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (LDP2) Proposed Plan

The Development Strategy provides the framework for managing change and shaping how the area will develop in the future. The focus is on regeneration and consolidation of our urban areas and enhancing existing places. The development strategy of the Proposed Plan is to manage and enable growth, by promoting 3 spatial objectives **Creating Sustainable Places & Communities, Promoting Sustainable & inclusive Economic Growth, Promoting a Low- Carbon Place.**

A site evaluation was also prepared to gather robust and consistent site information. Green belt and the impact of potential sites on the landscape character were key elements of the Site Evaluation which accompanies the Proposed Plan (Appendix A – Extract).

Green belt landscape character played an important role in helping to identify the Proposed Plan's 3 Spatial Objectives and in particular the following components of these:

- To safeguard and enhance the historic, built and natural environment.
- To protect the green belt and protect and enhance landscape character and setting.
- To prioritise the reuse of existing buildings and the use of vacant and brownfield land.
- To promote sustainable design to provide for energy conservation and generation, ensuring a reduction in carbon emissions and the move towards a low carbon place and economy.

The key diagram (Figure 4) illustrates the Development Strategy and broad locations identified for development over the plan period. The symbols on the key diagram are indicative and do not represent precise locations or sites.

Strategic Policies (1-3) and the Spatial Delivery of Growth (Policies M1-M3) set the framework for the Development Strategy of the Proposed Plan. In particular Strategic Policy 1 – provides the Council's approach, namely regeneration, consolidation and environmental enhancement through continuation of the master planned approach to development at the following Strategic Development Opportunity locations:

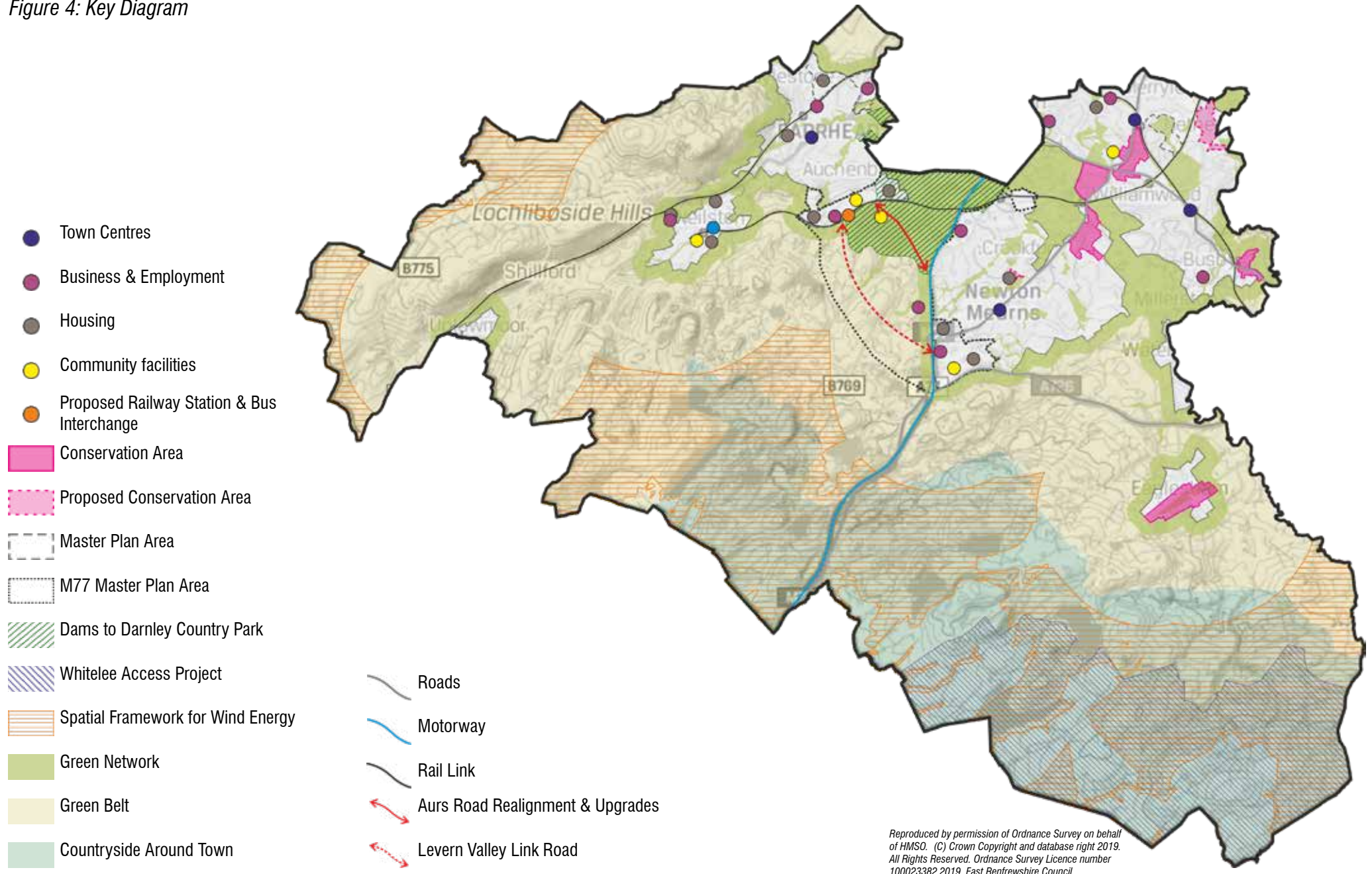
- Maidenhill/Malletsheugh, Newton Mearns (Policy M2.1);
- Barrhead South – Springhill, Springfield, Lyoncross (Policy M2.2);
- Glasgow North – Shanks/Glasgow Road, Barrhead (Policy M3);

The Strategic Development Opportunities are master planned areas which were promoted through LDP1 and which removed Maidenhill and Barrhead South from the green belt. Barrhead North was a brownfield location within the urban area.

The 3 Strategic Development Opportunities were supported by adopted masterplans which contain landscape strategies and framework, and have been carried forward to the Proposed LDP2.

The research and analysis set out in the Housing and Education Background Reports has evidenced that further housing releases would have a significant impact upon the education estate. As the LDP2 provides a generous housing land supply no further housing sites are therefore identified for release in the Proposed Plan.

Figure 4: Key Diagram



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## CONCLUSIONS

The Strategy does not promote any further residential development outside the urban areas and consequently would not result in any additional impact on the green belt and landscape character of the area. Green belt and landscape character matters were fully considered in preparation of the LDP1.

The green belt boundary will continue to be maintained and protected with only minor amendments made in this Plan. The strategy will seek to ensure that the green belt continues to protect the character, identify and setting of the urban areas.

## APPENDIX A: Site Evaluation Criteria

<i>Q1: What is the Land use type?</i>	Score
Brownfield	3
Mix - mostly Brownfield	2
Mix - mostly Greenfield	1
Greenfield	0
Open space (D5)	-3
<b>Site Score</b>	

<i>Q2: Where is the site located?</i>	Score
Site entirely within urban area	3
Green belt site adjacent urban area with development/ strong boundaries on 3 or more sides	2
Green belt site adjacent urban area with development/ strong boundaries on 2 sides	1
Green belt site adjacent urban area with development/ strong boundaries on 1 side	0
Isolated/detached Green belt site	-3
<b>Site Score</b>	

<i>Q3: Impact of Development</i>	Score
a) For sites within the URBAN AREA, how would the development impact on the character of the settlement	
Positive Contribution	3
Neutral	1
Negative Contribution	0
b) For sites within the GREEN BELT, how would the development impact on the landscape character or setting of the settlement	
Neutral	3
Moderate Impact	1
Significant Impact	0
<b>Site Score</b>	

<i>Q4: Ownership/market Interest</i>	Score
Is the site under the ownership/option to a Developer?	3 if yes 1 if marketed 0 if none
Are there any legal burdens or further land assembly required?	-1 for any burdens/land assembly required
<b>Site Score</b>	

<i>Q5: Does the site fall within or affect a national (SSSI/TPO) or local site (LBS) of environmental or biodiversity/ecological value?</i>	Score
No adverse/neutral impact	3
Moderate impact	1
Significant impact	0
<b>Site Score</b>	

<i>Q6: Will the proposal adversely affect Conservation Area/ Listed Building/Archaeology/Ancient Monument?</i>	Score
No adverse/neutral impact	3
Moderate impact	1
Significant impact	0
<b>Site Score</b>	

<i>Q7: How accessible is the site to existing services and facilities?</i>	Score
High accessibility	3
Medium accessibility	1
Low accessibility	0
<b>Site Score</b>	

<i>Q8: How accessible is the site to public transport? Rail 800m bus 400m</i>	Score
High accessibility (both)	3
Medium accessibility (1 only)	1
Low accessibility (neither)	0
<b>Site Score</b>	

<i>Q9 Are there any constraints to development including:</i>	Score
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flood Risk</li> <li>• Drainage</li> <li>• Contamination</li> <li>• Topography</li> <li>• Access</li> <li>• Infrastructure and Services</li> </ul>	
None/None known	3
Moderately constrained	1
Severely constrained	0
<b>Site Score</b>	



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2 Spiersbridge Way  
Spiersbridge Business Park  
Thornliebank  
G46 8NG