

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT FACTSHEET

East Lothian's historic environment is extensive. It encompasses just around 2,700 properties and structures that are listed for their architectural or historic importance. There are 30 designated conservation areas and there are around 300 scheduled monuments and thousands of other archaeological sites all listed in the East Lothian Historic Environment Record. The Local Development Plan 2018 protects these historic environment assets from harm through a series of planning policies in its Cultural heritage section. In addition, supplementary planning guidance on Cultural Heritage and the Built Environment provides additional explanation and justification for these policies: [Supplementary Planning Guidance \(SPG\) | Local Development Plan | East Lothian Council](#)

In addition LDP1 provides policies that ensure that archaeology is properly dealt with when planning applications affect an area of archaeological interest or its setting and that proper recording of any archaeology is undertaken at the appropriate time. Historic battlefields, currently protected in the national interest are the subject of a separate policy that seeks to avoid harm to them from development proposals.

Historic gardens and designed landscapes whether of national regional or local significance are also protected through a separate policy. Further survey and analysis work is currently ongoing to investigate priority gardens and designed landscapes of more local importance to provide additional information to enable better decisions to be made in future in line with this policy. The LDP also contains some site specific policies relating to locally significant heritage.

Many of these policies are long standing and have not been criticised in any planning appeal. How the policies are applied is on a case by case basis through planning and listed building consent applications. The historic environment designations affect approximately 18% of properties in East Lothian and approximately 16% of planning applications and listed building applications are made each year affecting historic buildings and areas.

The historic environment of East Lothian is beneficial to its economy in terms of the value placed on it by visitors to East Lothian. It also provides the unique environments in which much of daily life in East Lothian is undertaken.

National Planning Framework 4 is now also a part of the Development Plan against which planning applications will be determined. It requires an LDP to support the sustainable management of the historic environment through its spatial strategy and to identify, protect and enhance valued historic assets and places. Its Policy 7 protects the historic environment of the whole of Scotland and outlines where development proposals that affect it might be supported.

Some parts of the new policy reflect updated thinking on for example situations where demolition of a listed building is proposed and will clearly take precedence over LDP1 policy. Policy 7 also provides general policy parameters for proposals dealing with the historic environment including proposals for development in conservation areas that apply to listed buildings, demolition of an unlisted building in a conservation area, scheduled monuments, gardens and designed landscapes, battlefields and non-designated historic environment assets such as archaeological sites. Local Development Plan policies add more local policy detail to such policies.

For the first time buildings at risk, those on the national register and those at risk locally, are addressed in the national policy which supports their beneficial reuse. East Lothian has circa 65 buildings at risk on the national register many of which have been on the register for a number of years. However, there have also been a number of successful restorations and conversions of buildings at risk in East Lothian in recent years, particularly in the period when local property values have been buoyant and enabled individuals to avoid loss making restoration projects. Many of the more long standing properties will require public subsidy of some kind to enable their beneficial reuse. However, not all of East Lothian's buildings at risk are on the register and in particular there are a large number of vernacular farm and other buildings in the countryside which merit inclusion on the list but have not been surveyed. Several other buildings at risk in East Lothian have been indicated to Historic Environment Scotland, who manage the national register, but await survey by Historic Environment Scotland officers prior to inclusion on the register.

Of the historic environment designations the Council is responsible for conservation areas, locally significant gardens and designed landscapes and non-scheduled sites of archaeological interest. Currently there are 30 designated conservation areas in East Lothian. Conservation Areas are areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character of which is important to conserve or enhance. These are periodically reviewed and any proposed boundary changes or new conservation areas will be made at Proposed Plan stage. The existing designated conservation areas can be found at [Conservation Areas | Historic Environment and Planning | East Lothian Council](#)

Key Challenges for LDP2

Policies for the historic environment will remain quite constant as there will be a continued aim to protect the historic assets of the County. Policies and guidance will have to be reviewed to ensure that new pressures, such as from the climate emergency, can be addressed without damaging the character of the historic environment. Part of this exercise will include the review of conservation area management plans and guidelines.