

5. Environment and Conservation

Background

5.1 The local environment is one of the County Borough's greatest resources, being an essential component in residents' quality of life and in the successful development of local industrial and tourism initiatives. Environmental quality is under threat from many directions, including intensive farming methods, the destruction of natural habitats, the use of countryside for development, and the redevelopment of historic areas in settlements. The County Borough contains several derelict and underused or neglected sites and hazardous industrial uses. The Council is committed to action to rectify the damage done in the past, to prevent further deterioration, and to conserve and enhance those landscape and townscape elements which form an important part of the local heritage and its residents' quality of life. Necessary changes should respect and complement the character of the environment.

Green Barriers

Policy EC1 Within Green Barriers, development will only be granted planning permission if it is for agriculture, forestry, essential facilities for outdoor sport and recreation, cemeteries and other uses of land which maintain the openness of the Green Barrier and do not conflict with the purpose of including land within it.

5.2 There are several instances where existing settlements come into close proximity and there is a need to maintain a belt of countryside free from development. The purposes of a Green Barrier include:

- i) to prevent the coalescence of urban areas and villages with other settlements;
- ii) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- iii) to protect the setting of urban areas and villages;
- iv) to assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

In Wrexham, green barriers which possess the same characteristics and purposes of formal green belts, except in their long-term permanency, have coped with a wide variety of development pressures and successfully served their purposes. The designation of a green belt is therefore considered unnecessary. Mineral extraction and landfilling of wastes do not conflict with the purposes of the Green Barrier provided that the development does not detract from the open character of the area and includes high standards of restoration. Predominantly urban uses involving substantial built development or night-time lighting are not considered suitable uses in a green barrier.