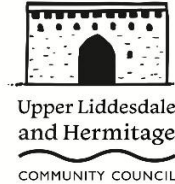


Upper Liddesdale and Hermitage Local Place Plan 2025 to 2035



LIDDEL WATER courtesy of Mark Sydenham

Two Waters, One Community

Glossary

HHC: Hermitage Hall Committee

LDP2: Local Development Plan 2

LPP: Local Place Plan

NPF4: National Planning Framework 4

SBC: Scottish Borders Council

SBCP: Scottish Borders Community Plan

SOSE: South of Scotland Enterprise

SSDA: South of Scotland Destination Alliance

TLLP: Teviot and Liddesdale Locality Plan

TLRCA: Teviot and Liddesdale Rural Communities Alliance

ULHCC: Upper Liddesdale and Hermitage Community Council

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1. Foreword and Acknowledgements

The Upper Liddesdale and Hermitage Community Council (ULHCC) developed this Place Plan in 2023-25. The motivation for its creation was set out in the Chairman's report for the AGM on 11th May 2023¹.

“The driving principle for this Community Council is that we must be prepared to interact with people and organisations who want to make changes to our local environment, or we could well find that our familiar local landscape which we know and love is changing in ways with which we are not happy and are not what we would wish. We also need to decide, as a community, ways in which our environment could change for the better and work to facilitate those changes”

In 2025 the Chairman's report ²reflected:” we find that the structures and landscapes which we had thought immutable are being subject to forces which are leaving communities such as ours struggling to see what will remain when the dust settles. Our timeless vista of gently rolling hills and rural life is changing as hill farming becomes an increasingly marginal activity. There is in planning the prospect now of wind farms with a total of 350 turbines up to 250 metres high in this area. There is also a proposal to bring a 400KV transmission line through our area, carrying renewables power from Scotland into England. The pressure on this area is that it is to be turned into an industrial energy landscape with an underfloor of forestry, which is both visually unappealing and unsustainable for any local economy. These are not changes which we chose or upon which we were consulted.”

This Local Place Plan aims to bring together the current priorities as well as aspirations for the future of those who live, work or visit our area. It is a powerful tool expressing how our landscape should be used and developed.

Many desired improvements in our area are achievable by our own hand but some will require a collective effort. Achieving certain changes will necessitate practical and financial backing from both public and private organizations. We need to work closely with our neighbouring communities for mutual benefit in areas of shared interest.

In the production of the place plan, thanks must be given to the involvement of members of our community in giving their ideas, feedback and their time. Their dedication and commitment to our region is evident, and this plan aims to further motivate local residents, establish common objectives, attract funding, and emphasise our priorities to local authorities and the broader government.

Geoffrey Kolbe Chair, Upper Liddesdale, and Hermitage Community Council

Rosemary Webster Place Plan Lead, Vice Chair Upper Liddesdale and Hermitage Community Council

¹ https://www.ulhcc.scot/past_meetings/AGM_11th_May_2023.pdf

² [UL&H CC draft minutes AGM meeting 10 April 2025](#)

2. Introduction and Overview

Executive Summary

This executive summary provides an overview of the key elements of the Upper Liddesdale and Hermitage Local Place Plan, highlighting the community's vision, priorities, and the projects that will help achieve them .

The Upper Liddesdale and Hermitage Local Place Plan (LPP) aims to guide the development and use of land in the local area, ensuring that the community's vision and priorities are reflected in future planning decisions. This plan was developed by the Upper Liddesdale and Hermitage Community Council (ULHCC) with the support of independent consultants and funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

Vision and Objectives

The vision for Upper Liddesdale and Hermitage is to create a thriving community that enhances local facilities while conserving and promoting the area's natural beauty and historical heritage. The plan outlines several strategic objectives, including:

Celebrating and conserving natural capital and historical heritage.

Enhancing local facilities to improve the quality of life for residents.

Building a resilient and involved local community.

Creating a sustainable, beautiful, and accessible environment.

Developing the area as a great place to visit, connecting with other communities .

Community Engagement

The development of the LPP involved extensive community engagement, including surveys, focus groups, and public meetings. The community's input was crucial in identifying the key priorities and challenges facing the area. The main concerns highlighted by residents included road safety, public transport, housing, and the impact of infrastructure developments such as wind farms and commercial forestry .

Governance and Implementation

The ULHCC will lead the implementation of the LPP, working closely with local authorities, community groups, and other stakeholders. The plan will be reviewed periodically to ensure it remains relevant and responsive to the community's needs .

2.1 Introduction

A Local Place Plan³ is a new type of community-led plan, introduced by Section 14 of the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019. This gives communities the opportunity to produce proposals for the development and use of land in their local area. Upper Liddesdale and Hermitage Community Council⁴ has developed this plan. It is an eligible community body to submit a Local Place Plan to Scottish Borders Council⁵.

This Local Place Plan will be submitted to Scottish Borders Council to validate and register and will be taken into consideration during the development of its next Local Development Plan⁶. The plan will identify what should happen in each community and where it should happen.

The project ideas outlined in this plan can be initiated and executed by the community itself, with support from statutory bodies through collaborative partnerships, where relevant. With a Local Place Plan registered and verified, the people of our community will be able to influence and drive developments in the area, and this is our platform to voice our own aspirations for the area.

In 2024, Scottish Borders Council awarded funding, provided by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund⁷ through the Placemaking Framework⁸, to allow independent consultants Community Enterprise⁹ to assist in completing a Local Place Plan with the Upper Liddesdale and Hermitage community.

Work has continued into 2025 to identify areas of alignment with the Local Place Plans being developed in some of our nearby Community Council areas, including Denholm and District, Southdean, Hobkirk, and Upper Teviotdale & Borthwick Water. Hawick and Jedburgh are key services providers to this area and have developed place plans too¹⁰.

Process



³ <https://www.ourplace.scot/home/local-place-plans>

⁴ <https://www.ulhcc.scot/>

⁵ i.e. a community council established in accordance with Part 4 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973: <https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/directory-record/33216/upper-liddesdale-and-hermitage>

⁶ <https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/plans-guidance/local-place-plans>

⁷ <https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/community-grants-funding/uk-shared-prosperity-fund/2>

⁸ <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/b8af497ec5d0471597354de63ff05fe4>

⁹ <https://communityenterprise.co.uk/>

¹⁰ Hawick: <https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/downloads/download/1670/hawick-place-plan> Jedburgh: <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/b071c4a0101b4e6eb1aa993e219ed444>

2.2 Our Vision

Our vision is for a thriving community, working to enhance our facilities and to conserve and promote our naturally quiet and beautiful landscape, for the benefit of our residents, neighbours and visitors

2.3 Our Investment Themes and Strategic Objectives

The Place Plan process has identified core thematic areas that will underpin and support the achievement of the vision.

Directly aligned to the investment themes, we have identified strategic objectives with the specific purpose of setting out what we want to achieve, and to express where we want to get to.

Theme 1: A place that celebrates, conserves and promotes its natural capital and historical heritage

Strategic Objective: We will be proud of the assets in our area, and conserve them for future generations to enjoy.

Theme 2: Enhancing our facilities: A great place to live and work

Strategic Objective: We will be a place with great facilities, where people of all ages enjoy a good standard of living and quality of life, and where local businesses can thrive.

Theme 3: A resilient and involved local community

Strategic Objective: We will be a thriving community, where our assets can be of benefit to people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds and local people are involved in decision making about their area.

Theme 4: A sustainable, beautiful and accessible place

Strategic Objective: Our environment will be well looked after, accessible to all, and will help our community move to net zero.

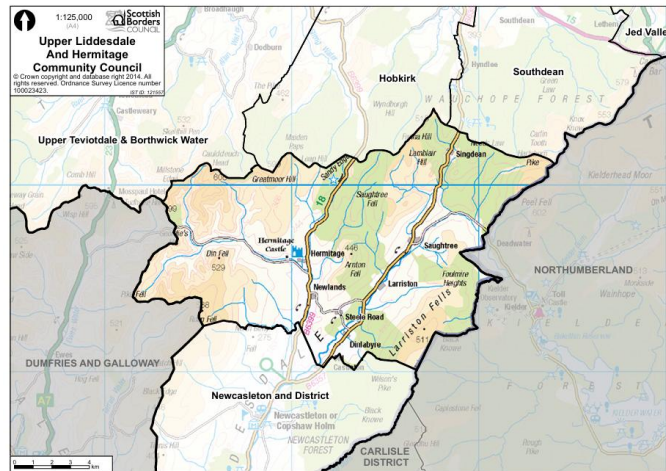
Theme 5: A great place to visit, connecting to other communities

Strategic Objective: Our area will have excellent amenities for visitors and be a great base for visitors to explore the South of Scotland and neighbouring communities.

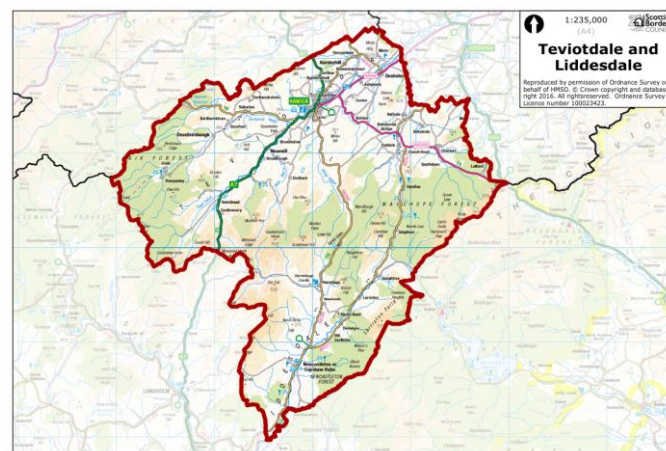
3. Description and Context of the Area

3.1 Local Place Plan Area Map

The Local Place Plan boundary follows the Upper Liddesdale and Hermitage Community Council boundary¹¹. It includes homesteads such as Hermitage, Newlands, Steele Road, Dinlabyre, Larriston, Dinley, Gorrenberry and Saughtree:



This Local Place Plan needs to be considered in the wider context of the Teviotdale and Liddesdale Locality¹², as well as the wider context of Scottish Borders Council.



The adjacent Community Councils, who have been notified of this Local Place Plan¹³, are:

- Newcastleton and District
- Southdean
- Langholm, Ewes and Westerkirk
- Hobkirk
- Upper Teviotdale and Borthwick Water
- Kielder Parish Council

¹¹ https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/downloads/file/1183/upper_liddesdale_and_hermitage

¹² https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/downloads/file/2250/teviot_and_liddesdale_map

¹³ Section 4 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Place Plans) (Scotland) Regulations 2021

3.2 About the Area

Overview and History

Upper Liddesdale and Hermitage is a sparsely populated rural area located to the northeast of Newcastleton village in the Scottish Borders. The area is characterised by the valleys of the Hermitage and Liddel Waters, surrounded by rolling upland hills, peat and moorland.

The area has a strong cultural heritage with sites including the megalithic monument Ninestane Rig and Hermitage Castle. The area has taken part in the historical stories of Bonnie Prince Charlie, Mary Queen of Scots and was involved in reiving history. Liddesdale is known as “the cockpit of the Border” and in the past was home to many reiving clans. Lost Reiver towers are referenced in Border Ballads, and it is feasible to identify the locations and, in certain instances, partial remains of some of these towers. The Elliots had towers in Upper Liddesdale including the Prickenhaugh tower which was their stronghold¹⁴ and at Larriston. Braidley, Thirlshope, Riccarton and Goranberry also had towers although remains may be sparse.

The land use of valleys and hills in the area has predominantly been agricultural for many centuries. Small crofts were replaced, in later times, by large estates. The farms employed workers and housed their families in workers cottages. There were many sheep of traditional local breeds, on the hills and in-byes plus cattle grazing. Improved pasture supported production of hay and winter feeds. Over the past century, agriculture has slowly and now more rapidly declined. Commercial Forestry increased following the Second World War and has lately been expanding further onto even improved farmland. Recently, planning permission has been granted for wind farm construction in surrounding areas, and several energy infrastructure projects are planned for Upper Liddesdale and Hermitage.

There would have been a strong sense of community in past times, with households working together and coming together across the hills and valleys in active community spaces. There were many families and employment for farmers, household staff and gamekeepers as well. There were once schools at Saughtree, Riccarton Junction (where a community worked on the railway) and at Hermitage. A Church at Saughtree was used regularly until recent times. There is still a vibrant Community Hall with frequent social events.

Many residents have lived within the area or surrounding Border country throughout their lives. Over the years, the farming families and the number of children has decreased perhaps as local employment in the area has changed. There is some influx of new residents, including individuals returning to their origins, retirees, those seeking a more rural lifestyle, and professionals working remotely due to advancements in technology and the rise of distance working.

¹⁴ [Liddesdale: The Lost Towers of the Elliots. Roxburghshire, Scottish Borders – Reivers](#)

The **2017 Feasibility study for a proposed Scottish Borders National Park**¹⁵ found that the area (covering Cheviot, Teviot and Liddesdale) has:

- Beautiful, historically authentic and geologically significant Borderland landscape that is nationally outstanding and admired;
- A continuing vibrant and distinct identity with a strong coherent pride of place treasured across all age-groups arising from a unique cultural heritage;
- Land based businesses and communities entering a new era of policy and support mechanisms;
- Social and economic special needs like incomes, jobs and digital connectivity that, for many residents, are well below the national average

Some of the key facts and numbers¹⁶ included:

- Centralisation of education, caring, community and retail services in Teviot.
- High residential desirability but ageing demographic and outmigration of young
- GVA (gross value added) below average growth, low average visitor stays and low national and international area profile.
- Maturing forestry – low added value and high impact on roads.
- Wildlife habitats - Rare but accessible and species-rich
- Landscape - Outstanding quality, beauty and variety; No major roads or large settlements. Moorland mosaic with wide horizons and distant unobstructed views – grand and intimate scales – wildland qualities
- Historic sites: Greatest density of scheduled monuments in Borders
- Economy - Dependence on primary industries and small business. Lack of professional jobs. GVA per head below Scottish average. Poor broadband and mobile coverage.

The campaign for a Scottish Borders National Park was ultimately unsuccessful, but the challenges identified remain, and new ways will need to be found to address them.

¹⁵ Page 7:

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/645920f54a2dc2492e2f0b55/t/6500556bef1d9355d5f7b066/1694520691947/Borders-National-Park-Feasibility-Study.pdf>

¹⁶ At pages 11-12

Heritage sites

Heritage sites abound, including:

- Hermitage Castle¹⁷
- Hermitage Chapel¹⁸
- Ninestane Rig¹⁹
- Saughtree Church²⁰ (now in private ownership but available for use)
- Oliver Mausoleum
- The Buckstone²¹
- Wheel Causeway²²
- The Bloody Bush monument²³
- Homestead moat remains at Kirndeane
- Riccarton Tower²⁴
- Variety of earthworks, settlement sites, tower remains and other historical sites.
- Sheep folds
- Path of the dismantled Waverley Line and connection to Kielder
- Riccarton Junction
- Whitrope Heritage Centre, a railway-based heritage visitor attraction²⁵ run by The Waverley Route Heritage Association



The Border Reiver Trail, a 50-mile-long driving route around famous Reiver sites, goes through the area, including along the valley of Hermitage Water, and past Hermitage Castle²⁶.

establish who we are and what we have

¹⁷ Owned and managed by Historic Environment Scotland: <https://www.historicenvironment.scot/visit-a-place/places/hermitage-castle/>

¹⁸ Near to the castle: <https://www.undiscoveredscotland.co.uk/hawick/chapelofhermitage/index.html>

¹⁹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ninestane_Rig

²⁰ <https://www.scotlandschurchestrust.org.uk/church/saughtree-kirk/>

²¹ <https://www.megalithic.co.uk/article.php?sid=6764>

²² [Wheel Causeway | Canmore](https://canmore.org.uk/site/68001/wheel-causeway)

²³ <https://canmore.org.uk/site/68001/bloody-bush>

²⁴ [Search Results for "riccarton" - Reivers](#)

²⁵ <https://wrha.org.uk/>

²⁶ <https://theborderreivertrail.co.uk/#places>

Natural Capital

Natural capital is the stock of natural resources, which includes geology, soils, air, water and all living organisms²⁷.

The landscape, environment and natural beauty of the area is considered by the community as the greatest asset of Upper Liddesdale and Hermitage. A diversity of habitats exists: rivers and burns, waterfalls, peat and moor, open pasture, Southern Upland hills, Sites of Special Scientific interest (SSSI) as well as ancient woodlands, managed forestry and mixed woodland planting. All contribute to a rich diversity which supports nature-based tourism, such as wildlife photography, walking, cycling, horse riding.

The diversity can be explored through natural features in the landscape such as:

- Liddel and Hermitage Waters and associated burns
- Waterfalls on Larriston Burn
- Water features at Caddroun pots²⁸
- Accessible hills (some with trigonometry points) include
 - Cauldcleuch Head
 - Greatmoor Hill
 - Tudhope Hill
 - Din Fell
 - Larriston Fell
 - Saughtree Fell
 - Arnton Fell
 - Roan Fell



GREATMOOR HILL courtesy of Rosemary Webster

Hydrology

Upper Liddesdale and Hermitage Community is defined on some of its boundaries by the watersheds of the **Liddel and Hermitage waters**.

Liddel water arises on Windy Knowe and is joined by Dawston burn catching water from Saughtree. Hermitage water is formed from waters off the hills up the Hermitage valley, Twislehope burn and Gorrenberry for instance and is joined by Roughley and Whitrope burns. The two waters meet South of our area and flow into Newcastleton.

²⁷ [Natural capital - Wikipedia](#)

²⁸ [Cauldron Pots \[Caddroun Pots\] © terry gregg cc-by-sa/2.0 :: Geograph Britain and Ireland](#)

The monument to the Source of the North Tyne River at Deadwater²⁹ is on the Scotland England border.

All households rely on spring water and sources from the hills are often affected by changes of land use, construction and heavy vehicle traffic as well as climate. Flooding of properties and farmland has become an increasingly frequent problem down all valleys with some properties flooded multiple times.



LIDDEL IN FLOOD courtesy of Mark Sydenham

Landowners

Land for agriculture is mainly semi-improved or rough grazing land and hill areas. Most farms are grazed by sheep, with some suckler herds. There are limited areas of improved pasture and a scarcity of land for arable crops. While there is a desire for farming activities to persist in the region, several farms have been sold and subsequently developed for forestry purposes. There are a number of major landowners in the area, including farm estates with land buildings and houses. Larger landowners have influence on land use; they may have the ability to sell or use large area of land in a particular way, which affects others in the community. Some areas are not locally owned. Owners include J.C Hands at Larriston³⁰, Oxygen Conservation³¹ and Forestry and Land Scotland

²⁹ <https://fabulousnorth.com/source-of-the-north-tyne-river-deadwater/>

³⁰ <https://www.tilhill.com/resource-hub/our-news/survey-puts-a-value-on-natural-capital-of-new-woodlands/>

³¹ <https://www.oxygenconservation.com/>

Amenities

Newcastleton is the nearest village, to the south of the Community Council area, and has amenities including shops (butcher, baker, supermarkets), public toilet, post office, restaurants and a primary school. Hawick and Langholm are the nearest towns, to the north and southwest respectively, and have more amenities including primary and secondary schooling.

Primary age children mainly go to Newcastleton. Secondary age children fall in the Hawick High School catchment area some miles away, and often two bus rides are necessary, but some children attend Langholm Secondary.

Public transport

Two roads run through the Community Council area, the B6399 and the B6357. The area is served by one bus³², service 128 which runs between Newcastleton and Hawick. The timetable is limited. No buses run along the Newcastleton to Bonchester Bridge Road.

Onward travel to other areas (e.g. Newcastleton to Carlisle or Langholm) is possible, but onward connectivity to key locations (such as Borders College, Borders General Hospital, care facilities for relatives) is poor.

Rail services can be accessed from Tweedbank and Carlisle, and there is strong interest in the potential for extending the Waverley line onwards through Newcastleton to improve links and reduce traffic.

Roads

Car availability is currently required to allow flexibility in accessing employment, education, after school activities, social gatherings and more varied shopping opportunities.

There are designated logging routes in the area, with large numbers of lorries using the B6357 in particular. This creates some concerns for road cyclists and pedestrians as regards safety. Heavy vehicles contribute to the rapid deterioration of road surfaces.

Flooding and surface water on the roads is frequent in heavy rainfall as is erosion of road edges where roads follow close to the rivers.

Regular accidents occur with leisure motorcyclists along these routes also.

Road closures due to accidents, repairs, and developments such as wind farms, can cause immeasurable difficulties due to long, onerous and costly diversions.

³² Operated by Telford's: <https://telfordscoaches.com/localbusservices/bus-timetables/>

Outdoor activities and tourist information

The main attraction to the area is Hermitage Castle and Chapel (see Heritage Sites)

Walking, running, cycling and riding are all popular activities, both for residents and for visitors to the area however tourist information and details of routes is sparse in the area itself. Trails are promoted through the Town of 1,000 Trails initiative³³. Only a few walks involve the area, but these could be used and advertised locally.

Walking routes are listed on the SBC website³⁴ and one of the walks around Newcastleton, Route 12, features a route with a view from Whitrope Heritage Centre³⁵

Gorrenberry is an ecological restoration project, on hills rising above the Hermitage water aiming to restore biodiversity to an area of hillside. Mapboards have been set up in the woodland areas showing suggested routes over the hills³⁶.

On the community boundary, lies Cauldcleuch Head which is a Donald³⁷ : one of the hills between 2000 and 3000 feet situated south of the Highland fault boundary.

Scottish Borders Council lists details of **cycle routes**³⁸, and the area features in the map as Southern Borders Loop of the Bonchester Bridge trails³⁹. The C2C (Coast to Coast) route⁴⁰ which goes west to east from Stranraer to Eyemouth goes along the B6399.

Riding routes are listed on the SBC website⁴¹, and the South of Scotland Countryside Trails website⁴².

The Waverley Way, the old railway line between Hawick and Carlisle⁴³, is open to multi-use.

Visitor accommodation

This includes Alpenhaus⁴⁴, Larriston Farm⁴⁵, Gorrenberry Farm House⁴⁶ and Saughtree Roadside Cottage⁴⁷.

³³ <https://www.townof1000trails.co.uk/>

³⁴ <https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/parks-outdoors/walking>

³⁵ [newcastleton](#)

³⁶ www.gorrenberry.org.uk

³⁷ [sub munro hill list](#)

³⁸ <https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/parks-outdoors/cycling>

³⁹ <https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/downloads/file/7508/bonchester-bridge-trails>

⁴⁰ <https://scotlandstartshere.com/kirkpatrickc2c/>

⁴¹ <https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/parks-outdoors/horse-riding-routes>

⁴² <https://www.southofscotlandcountrysidetrails.co.uk/>

⁴³ <http://www.southofscotlandcountrysidetrails.co.uk/where-to-ride/waverley-way/>

⁴⁴ <https://www.singdean.co.uk/>

⁴⁵ https://www.airbnb.co.uk/rooms/14583853?source_impression_id=p3_1742200986_P3RCKWLqPZPKmWgh

⁴⁶ <http://gorrenberryhouse.co.uk/>

⁴⁷ <https://www.cottages.com/cottages/liddel-holiday-properties-the-liddel-haven-uk35337>

3.3 Demographics

A range of data sources has been assessed. Details are at Appendix 8.1. Some key facts and figures are below but it should be noted that the figures are not totally accurate as there is no exact data zone to access.

- The total population is 240, in 105 households
- Between 2011 and 2022,
 - The number of children in the area has dropped
 - The area has seen the proportion of population aged 65+ almost double
- The area is almost completely ethnically homogeneous
- The proportion of homes owned (outright or with a mortgage) in the ULHCC area has increased and the proportion of privately rented homes has decreased
- There are no socially rented homes in the area
- 2.9% of households have no access to a car or van. This is lower than the national average of 26.4%, but not surprising given the rural setting of the ULHCC area. However, for those households, it is likely to be a significant disadvantage, given the limitations of public transport in the area.

3.4 Assets

Assets in a community include not just **physical** assets, but also things like **organisations** and events, which foster a sense of local identity and civic pride.

The Upper Liddesdale and Hermitage Community Council⁴⁸ is the main community body for the area.

Hermitage Hall⁴⁹ is the central physical community asset in our area, run by Friends of Hermitage Hall, a Scottish Charity run by a Committee of residents⁵⁰.



Planning approval has been given for the land adjacent to the Hall (donated by Buccleuch Estates) for the

⁴⁸ <https://www.ulhcc.scot/>

⁴⁹ <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100067118882163>

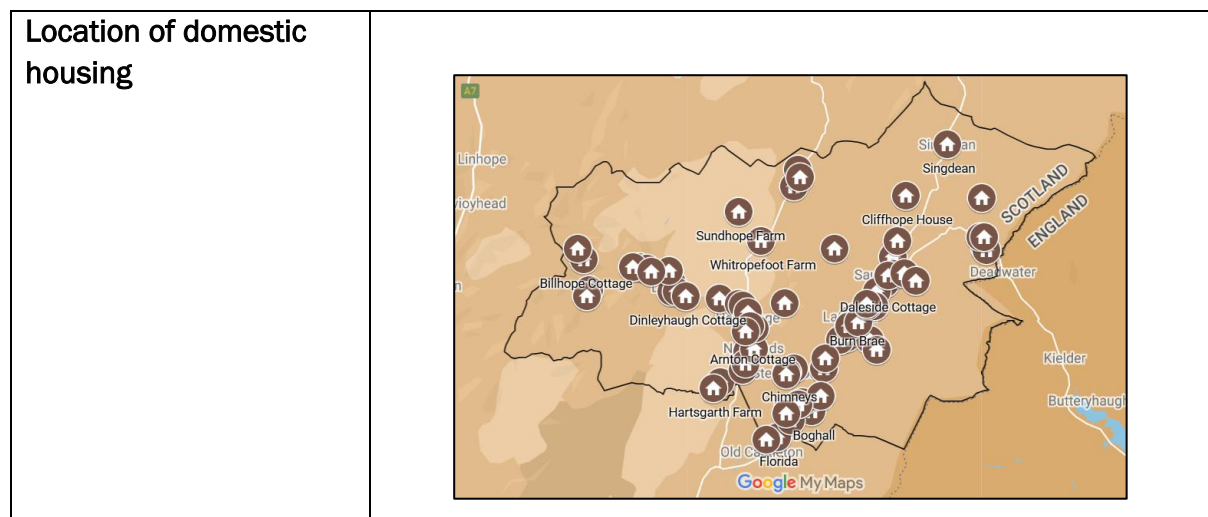
⁵⁰ <https://www.oscr.org.uk/about-charities/search-the-register/charity-details?number=SC044887>

creation of a **community garden** and social area. A copy of the landscape design concept plan, as approved, is at Appendix 8.2. This project will include parking, gardens, outdoor spaces to use for events, increased biodiversity with sensitive planting and development. Electric vehicle charging points and bike facilities are planned.

There are currently two ‘resilience sheds’ which contain equipment and tools that may be useful during a period of resilience stress (power cuts, storms, snow). The sheds are locked with a combination lock for which the resilience team have the code⁵¹. One resilience shed is next to Hermitage Hall, the other shed is on the B6357 opposite Larriston House, next to the post box and noticeboard. A third resilience shed will be installed in 2025 at the top end of Hermitage valley, at the entrance to Twislehope Farm. This network is planned to be extended to other areas of the community. The sheds will also have defibrillators attached to improve the availability and accessibility of these to members of the community.



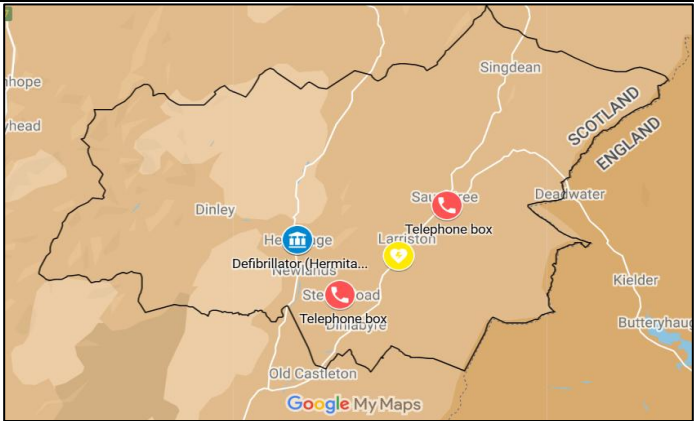
We have created an interactive GIS map, which is available on our website⁵², and which currently shows the following information about our assets:



⁵¹ Details at: <https://www.ulhcc.scot/resilience/index.htm>

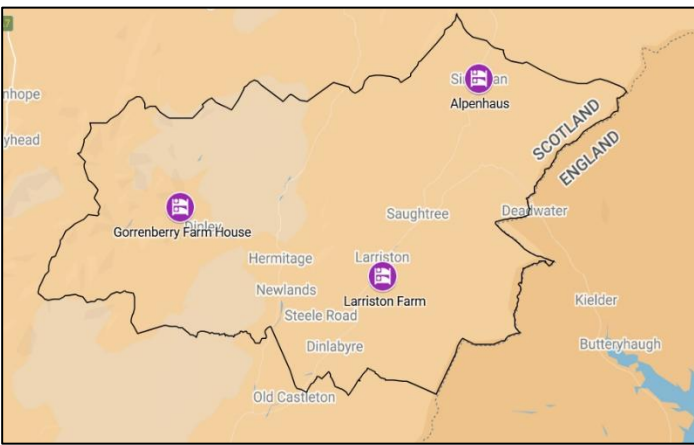
⁵² <https://www.ulhcc.scot/map/index.htm>

Community locations, buildings and structures of community interest: this includes Hermitage Hall, two public phone boxes, and two defibrillators



Tourist accommodation, holiday lets, B&Bs and similar:

- Gorrenberry Farm House
- Alpenhaus
- Larriston Farm



Historic Monuments:

- Hermitage Castle
- Hermitage Chapel
- Ninestane Rig
- Saughtree Church
- Oliver Mausoleum
- The Buckstone
- Whitrope Heritage Centre
- Riccarton Tower
- Riccarton Junction
- Clintwood Castle
- Homestead Moat
- Bloody Bush

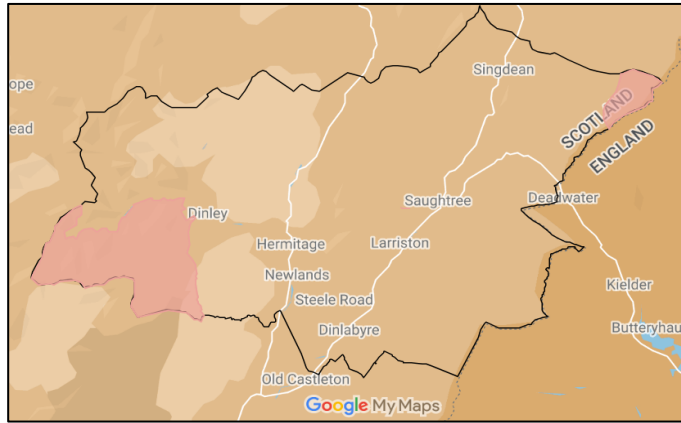


SSSI, Sites of Special Scientific Interest:

Kielderhead Moors

Palmers Cutting

Langholm-Newcastleton Hills



4. Community Engagement

4.1 Overview

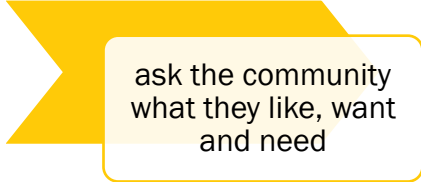
Our Local Place Plan has been developed using a variety of different community engagement mechanisms, aimed at giving as many people as possible the opportunity to share their views. These included a community survey, forum events, regular meetings and discussions at the local monthly “chat” events at Hermitage Hall as well as Community Council meetings.

We are satisfied that there has been a good level and continuous engagement with the process.

4.2 Community Survey

A community survey was launched at the March 2023 Hermitage Hall ‘Chat’ and coffee morning. The survey was promoted at the ULHCC meeting.

The survey was raised in order to collate views from residents and visitors. A copy is available at Appendix 8.3. It asked residents and visitors to number, in order of priority, various aspects of community life. It also welcomed comments on the best and worst things about the area.



ask the community
what they like, want
and need

Efforts were made to maximise community engagement:

- The survey was posted to all households within the community, with 2 hard copies of the survey and a stamped addressed envelope for returns
- An online version of the survey was available on the ULHCC website
- Everyone on the community contact list was emailed regarding the survey with links and contact details
- The survey was anonymous and was open to visitors and residents alike.

The period for replies was for the month of April 2023.

46 replies were received, including from 3 regular visitors to the area. Given the estimated population at the time of 218 this is a response rate of **approx. 20%**.

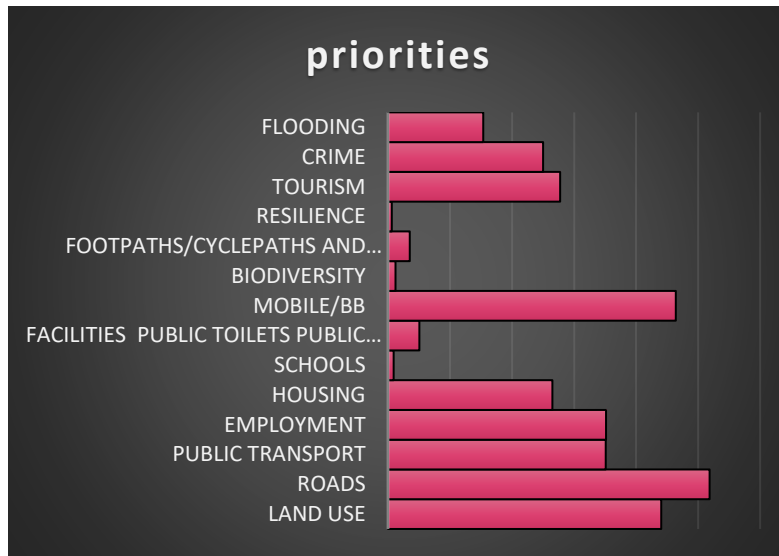
Highlights of the survey and major themes and priorities were analysed in an initial report and presented to the Community Council in July 2023. The report and presentation are available on the ULHCC website⁵³, with extracts at Appendix 8.3.

The majority of the respondents were over 50 years old, and many were retired (36.9%), reflecting the current demographics of the area.

⁵³ https://www.ulhcc.scot/place_plan/index.htm

17% were working from home, and 10% indicating they were involved in farming.

The main concerns of the respondents are shown in this graph:



Roads, Land use, and Broadband and mobile connectivity were the top 3 issues.

Public transport, Employment, Housing and Tourism were also very important.

Crime, Flooding and Facilities were less prominent concerns.

In addition to the scoring matrix, individual comments were encouraged on three specific, topical, environmental subjects influencing our community at the moment:

1. wind farm construction in the area
2. commercial forestry development
3. the move towards net zero

Respondents were also asked to identify the best and worst things about the area and were invited to comment on any other concerns that they had. The comments are incorporated into section 5 of this plan, with ideas at section 6.

4.3 Focus Groups

Following on from the survey, additional opportunities were provided for residents to give their views and discuss concern and to bring in a number of people who had not responded previously. Their views have been incorporated into the next section of this Local Place Plan.

- a chat and discussion at Hermitage Hall
- a suggestion box at Hermitage Hall
- a coffee morning with staff from Scottish Borders Council attending to invite discussion and to elicit further views
- cheese and wine evening December 2023 to discuss ideas and priorities
- posters and social media posts requesting involvement, ideas and contribution
- An informal focus group, facilitated by Community Enterprise, took place at a 'Chat' coffee morning at Hermitage Hall in November 2024, with 10 local residents



4.4 Community Council Minutes

Minutes of Community Council meetings were reviewed to note the key issues arising over a period of time. See the summary at Appendix 8.4

5.2 Land Use

Forestry

Although acknowledgement of the contribution of commercial forestry to local jobs and income was expressed by a few, many felt that this did not offset the negative factors and concerns at the growing number of monoculture plantations.

“forestry does little to ensure consistent employment in our community, affects our road networks detrimentally and reduces access for recreation quite frequently”

“forestry plays a vital role in the area”

“monoculture sitka spruce forests are mostly not owned by local people and they deny use of the land for employment and enjoyment”



The impact on roads and safety were a big concern as well as the switch from productive farming land to trees which has knock on effects on available jobs for local families.

“we have enough forestry in our community and neighbouring area”

Energy infrastructure

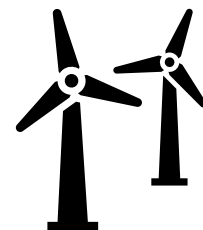
Infrastructure developments in the area have been a significant focus for the Community Council in recent years; namely windfarms⁵⁴ and pylons⁵⁵. The latest proposals for extra high **250m turbines “the equivalent of the tallest buildings in the city of London”** is concerning for many residents.

“energy must come from somewhere”

In the survey, respondents were asked about windfarms.

Again, some acknowledged positive aspects;

but most were very concerned at the loss of the familiar landscape, one of their most valued assets, and the disruption of road closures during construction;

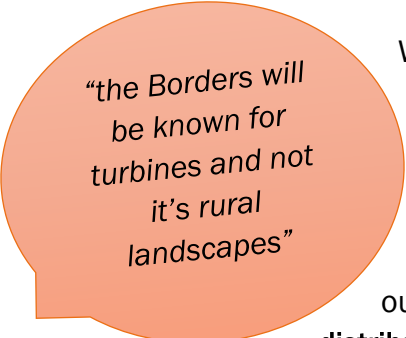


⁵⁴ See the list of those which have been discussed at Community Council meetings, at Appendix 8.4

⁵⁵ The Cross Border Connection project:


https://www.spenergynetworks.co.uk/pages/cross_border_connection.aspx

As a community, we are concerned that an increase in windfarms will: restrict our access to the countryside; create a visually unattractive landscape, which will stop people from visiting our area and remove land from the community that might otherwise be used for housing and agriculture.



“the Borders will be known for turbines and not it's rural landscapes”

We are also concerned that any benefits from windfarms and electricity infrastructure will not be seen in our immediate community area with energy produced being routed out of the area and the country and **no plans in place to increase**



“ruin the landscape and the impact of building them is terrible”

distribution and capacity locally. Some people in our community live off grid, so do not currently have any benefits from the national grid others are often subject to power cuts.

Overall control of the applications for Onshore Energy projects lies with the Scottish Government under Section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989 although the Scottish Borders Council Planning authority and ULHCC are statutory consultees in this process.

Upper Liddesdale and Hermitage Community calls upon the Scottish Government to uphold the National Planning Framework 4 that states that “Development proposals will only be supported where they maximise economic impact, including local and community socio-economic benefits such as employment, associated business and supply chain opportunities”

The community council, alongside our neighbours, are actively engaging with infrastructure developers in the area but feel overwhelmed by the bombardment of multiple plans from multiple providers.

As a sparse population we feel the lack of a voice. Cooperative working between ULHCC and neighbouring communities is vital in challenging and scrutinising developments. A coalition of smaller rural community councils, known as the Teviot and Liddesdale Rural Community Alliance (TLRCA), is hoping to be established to amplify our collective voice.

Rosie Pearson, co-founder of the Community Planning Alliance, writes that **“The current approach does not balance environmental, heritage, or archaeological considerations.”**

Residents feel that there is a lack of balance to the impact assessments. We need ongoing and substantial support from elected officials locally and nationally supporting our community in procuring meaningful consultation and ensuring a coherent approach to developments.

We have a clear mandate from the community to oppose the industrial scale of development proposed in our area


5.3 Net zero and the Just Transition

A Just Transition implies a fairer greener future for all but the community is being impacted negatively and disproportionately, sacrificing the positive aspects of the community that are beyond monetary value and cannot be adequately repaid through Community benefit schemes alone.

In the consultations households expressed a need for:

- **financial assistance** in retrofitting their homes.
- **A trusted traders and installers list**
- **improved distribution systems** to benefit the residents from any local energy production
- **increased EV charging points**
- **public transport options**
- **retained resilience** during power cuts including solid fuel options

The Scottish Land Trust’s report Beyond Community Benefit ⁵⁶– a new deal for thriving communities October 2023 states “The opportunity is now to ensure that the wealth in this green revolution can be more equitably shared, and we learn the lessons of the oil revolution, where so few communities benefited from Scotland’s natural resources. To do this, **we need to move beyond thinking that community benefit can be reduced to a single dimension token community payment...**”



identify
opportunities, needs
and challenges

⁵⁶ [Beyond-Community-Benefit-a-New-Deal-for-Thriving-Communities-Community-Land-Scotland-October-2023.pdf](#)

5.4 Roads, Traffic and Public Transport

Many survey respondents and attendees at events expressed their feelings of safety and appreciated the low crime rate in the area. However, they often expressed a lack of safety when discussing roads. Confidence in their **safety on the roads** was compromised in a number of ways, and this is affecting cyclists, joggers, horse riders and dog walkers.

Survey comments mentioned:

- Potholes and lack of repairs
- Damage by heavy vehicles from windfarm construction and forestry
- Vehicles causing issues on narrow roads: motorcycles, delivery vans, supercars, log-lorries
- Closures and long distances of diversions

There are no public footpaths along the roads in the area, and there have been incidents of pedestrian injuries and motorbike accidents. Verges can be difficult to walk along.

“edges of the roads make it difficult and unsafe to walk a dog”

Public transport deficits negatively affect residents without access to a car and contribute to increased road traffic. A coordinated approach would be required with the wider area to extend support and maintain **bus services**.

“extension of Waverley Line would be wonderful”

There is considerable support for the reintroduction of the Borders Railway from Carlisle to Tweedbank but connecting public transport will be essential.

5.5 Housing

Housing is sparse and separated with small settlements of houses. There is less support for vulnerable tenants in isolated rural areas compared to towns and a lack of housing options.

The nature of the housing stock, mainly stone built older properties, means that many households are dependent on oil, coal and wood and electricity. Opportunities for **improvements to energy efficiency** and alternative / renewable sources are small without retro fitting of existing properties. Much more financial support is required from the Scottish Government to enable residents to move to Net Zero.



Access to affordable / social housing is a concern for the community, as well as access to retirement housing and accessible housing for people with disabilities. There are **empty properties** in our area, which could be brought back in to use. This could encourage families and young people back to the area, and reverse rural population decline.

5.6 Connectivity

Digital connectivity is poor, which has implications for people studying or working from home in particular. Scottish Borders is part of a gigabit project which is currently



underway⁵⁷. The need for continued support for households to benefit from fibre broadband and **100% coverage** from mobile or satellite once land lines are removed was expressed.

5.7 Community Assets

Our key physical Community Asset is Hermitage Hall. This will need to be maintained, both physically and with a succession plan for existing volunteers running the Hall. Plans have been drawn up for the multi-faceted development of the community land adjacent to the hall. These are at Appendix 8.2. This development must continue to be supported.

Our resilience sheds will need to be maintained and the network developed.

A significant asset is the Natural Capital of the environment and this can be utilised in several ways including linking up with environmental initiatives such as the South of Scotland Golden Eagle Project⁵⁸ , Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels.

With cooperation from Landowners and developers the natural features of our landscape can be conserved and potentially made more accessible for visitors, such as Caddroun Pots, Larriston Waterfalls, Sundhope Falls.

⁵⁷ See second table in section 3: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/project-gigabit-progress-update-november-2024/project-gigabit-progress-update-november-2024#project-gigabit-contracts-and-procurement-pipeline>

⁵⁸ <https://www.goldeneaglessouthofscotland.co.uk/>

5.8 Visitor Provision

There is lots to experience in the area, but a lack of information for visitors. **Signage** for local walks is in poor condition and needs upgrading such as for Bloody Bush, the Waverley line.

Information boards and benches were all mentioned by survey respondents and these could be put in place with cooperation of landowners.

It was suggested that **Dark Sky accreditation** could be sought. Sites for viewing could be identified and signposted.

Many people expressed an interest in **producing leaflets** to share information for walking, cycling

and horse riding to help locals and visitors alike.



- C2C (Coast to Coast) route⁶³
- Cross border route
- Development of the Wheel Causeway
- Walks along the old railway lines

In the survey, some commented on issues with litter on verges and dog faeces, as well as human waste becoming more of an issue with increasing wild camping and mobile home visitors.



AURORA BOREALIS courtesy of Mark Sydenham

There is the opportunity for new initiatives and to link with other initiatives locally such as:

- the Town of 1,000 Trails project, “a fully user interactive online platform which promotes walking, cycling, running and horse-riding trails around the historic border town of Hawick and its surrounding area”⁵⁹
- attractions in neighbouring Northumberland, e.g. Kielder Water & Forest Park⁶⁰, which includes the Kielder Observatory⁶¹ and the Birds of Prey Centre⁶²

⁵⁹ <https://www.townof1000trails.co.uk/>

⁶⁰ <https://www.visitkielder.com/>

⁶¹ <https://kielderobservatory.org/>

⁶² <http://www.kielderbopc.com/>

⁶³ <https://scotlandstartshere.com/kirkpatrickc2c/>

Residents were keen for **public toilet** provision and a local café and a community shop were also mentioned.

5.9 Historic Heritage

Access to Ninestane Rig⁶⁴ and the nearby standing stones (a scheduled monument, on land owned by Forestry and Land Scotland) needs to be improved, including parking, signage, and improved pathways. Proposals for **a Heritage trail** including nearby settlement remains and the Buckstone should be followed through.

With cooperation from Landowners, additional heritage sites (listed previously) can be researched and signposted with opportunities of collaboration with neighbouring community councils for a heritage route

The facilities at Hermitage Castle (owned and maintained by Historic Environment Scotland) could be developed and improved, e.g. longer opening hours, more toilets, and the provision of refreshments.

Whitrope Heritage Centre brings visitors to the area. Facilities could be developed and improved, such as signage, heritage displays, toilets and cafeteria and pro-active marketing.

Our vision is for a thriving community, working to enhance our facilities and to conserve and promote our naturally quiet and beautiful landscape, for the benefit of our residents, neighbours and visitors

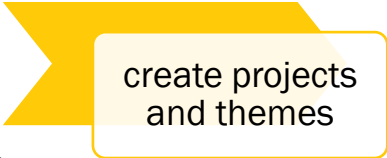
⁶⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ninestane_Rig

6. Proposals

6.1 Overview

The responses and engagement with the community, groups and organisations in our area, have helped us to identify the challenges faced by the community, and the actions we could undertake to work towards achieving our vision.

These responses have been brought together in a number of different proposals and projects detailed in **section 6.3** and illustrated on a map of the area.



create projects
and themes

The projects have been categorised into Themes and Objectives

Theme 1: A place that celebrates, conserves and promotes its natural capital and historical heritage

Strategic Objective: We will be proud of the assets in our area, and conserve them for future generations to enjoy.

Theme 2: Enhancing our facilities: A great place to live and work

Strategic Objective: We will be a place with great facilities, where people of all ages enjoy a good standard of living and quality of life, and where local businesses can thrive.

Theme 3: A resilient and involved local community

Strategic Objective: We will be a thriving community, where our assets can be of benefit to people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds and local people are involved in decision making about their area.

Theme 4: A sustainable, beautiful and accessible place

Strategic Objective: Our environment will be well looked after, accessible to all, and will help our community move to net zero.

Theme 5: A great place to visit, connecting to other communities

Strategic Objective: Our area will have excellent amenities for visitors and be a great base for visitors to explore the South of Scotland and neighbouring communities

These proposals require combinations of actions by ULHCC and Scottish Borders Council and partnership working with other agencies, by local organisations, and the community itself. In many areas, funding will need to be secured to deliver these actions. Some of the focus is on consolidating and sustaining projects and plans that are already underway.

6.2 National and Local Planning Context

This LPP aligns with national and local planning policy particularly with relevance to the principles detailed below. Alignment to the developed projects is detailed in the proposals **section 6.3**

1. National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4)⁶⁵ which has 6 spatial principals

1. Just transition
2. Conserving and recycling assets
3. Local Living
4. Compact urban growth
5. Rebalanced development
6. Rural revitalisation

2. The Scottish Borders Local Development Plan (LDP) adopted on 22 August 2024⁶⁶

The LDP has relevance to this local place plan in the policies below

Place Making and Design (PMD):

PMD1 Sustainability:

- c) protection of natural resources, landscapes, habitats and species
- g) encourage walking, cycling and public transport
- h) minimise light pollution
- l) involvement of local community in management of their surroundings

PMD2 Developments:

- of a scale and mass and height appropriate to surroundings

PMD3 Land use allocation

Housing Development (HD)

HD2 rural housing development

Economic development (ED):

General prescription against business and industrial uses outwith development areas

ED6 digital connectivity

ED7 Business tourism and leisure development

ED9 Renewable energy development

Environment Promotion and Protection (EP)

EP3 biodiversity

EP8 historic environment

Infrastructure (IS)

IS4 transport development

IS8 flooding

⁶⁵ [National Planning Framework 4 - gov.scot](https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-planning-framework-4/pages/1-1-introduction.aspx)

⁶⁶ <https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/plans-guidance/local-development-plan>

3. Teviot and Liddesdale Locality Plan (TLLP) 2020⁶⁷

- a. Economy Skills and learning
 - i. includes improved transport and road connectivity
 - ii. development of a strong tourist offering
 - iii. reliable broadband and mobile connectivity
- b. Health care and wellbeing
 - i. Improve availability and accessibility
 - ii. Increase the range of housing opportunities
 - iii. Increase the availability of local activities and information
- c. Quality of life
 - i. Ensure leisure and cultural services are accessible in rural and urban areas and are responsive to the needs of local users
- d. Our environment and place
 - i. Extend Borders Railway

4. Scottish Borders Community Plan (SBCP) 2023/33⁶⁸

- a. Access to better travel options across the Scottish Borders
- b. More people have access to a home that meets their needs and is part of a sustainable community
- c. Improved access to effective services

Our area's settlements are not included in the LDP settlement profiles. LDP2's Spatial Strategy focuses on key areas and major town centres in the Scottish Borders, making it unclear how smaller settlements and rural areas fit in. The Local Development Plan could highlight benefits for both smaller places and larger towns.

It is essential to balance the LDP support for large scale developments of wind farms and renewables with a need to protect and conserve rural environments and landscapes. This Local Place Plan must be considered in future changes to the Scottish Borders Council Local Development Plan.

⁶⁷ Priorities, as set out at pages 8-9: <https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/downloads/file/7595/teviot-and-liddesdale-locality-plan>

⁶⁸ ⁶⁸ Outcomes, as set out at page 12: <https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/downloads/file/12623/scottish-borders-community-plan-2023-33>

6.3 Projects: linked to themes and planning policy	Who	Timescales	National and local policies: NPF4, LDP2, TLLP, SBCP
THEME 1: A PLACE THAT CELEBRATES, CONSERVES AND PROMOTES ITS NATURAL CAPITAL AND HISTORICAL HERITAGE			
Strategic Objective: We will be proud of the assets in our area, and conserve them for future generations to enjoy			
PRIORITY AREAS: NATURAL CAPITAL, HISTORICAL HERITAGE, FLOOD MANAGEMENT			Relevant policy
1. Ensure continued, meaningful consultation and scrutinisation of planning proposals for land use, such as forestry, windfarms and pylons.	ULHCC SBC Scottish Government Neighbouring CC Landowners Energy Developers Forestry companies	Ongoing and immediate in line with emerging applications	NPF4 part1 LDP2 PMD1 c,h,l LDP2 PMD2 LDP2 PMD3 LDP2 ED9
2. Protect promote and enhance the natural environment. a. Community garden development at Hermitage Hall b. Identify Owl box sites c. Identify sites for bird hides d. Promote SSSI	HHC ULHCC Golden eagle Project Saving Scotland's red Squirrels RSPB Barn Owl Trust	Medium term	LDP2 PMD1 c LDP2 EP3 LDP2 EP13 LDP2 ED7
3. Support and develop heritage projects, both tangible and intangible including but not limited by a. creating a heritage trail to Ninestane Rig and Buckstone b. open the Wheel Causeway as a walking route	ULHCC Neighbouring Community Councils (b, d) Landowners Forestry and Land Scotland	Short to long term	NPF4 part3 LDP2 EP8 LDP2 PMD1 c LDP2 ED7

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> c. promote walks to Bloody Bush d. development of heritage driving route around neighbouring local community areas e. improve access to Oliver Mausoleum f. Whitrope Heritage Centre development g. Support Hermitage Castle and Chapel 	<p>Archaeology Scotland Historic Environment Scotland</p>		
<p>4. Create Teviot and Liddesdale Rural Communities Alliance to develop combined projects and scrutinise infrastructure applications</p>	<p>ULHCC Hobkirk CC Southdean CC Teviothead & Borthwick Water CC Denholm CC</p>	<p>Immediate and ongoing</p>	<p>LDP2 PMD all LDP2 EP8</p>
<p>5. Flood management measures not limited to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Dredging b. Water containment measures c. Warning systems d. Road erosion e. Flood proofing affected homes 	<p>ULHCC SEPA Landowners SBC Forestry developers</p>	<p>Long term</p>	<p>LDP2 IS8 LDP2 PMD1 c</p>
<p>6. Attain Dark Skies⁶⁹ accreditation and appropriate viewpoints with related promotional signage</p>	<p>ULHCC</p>	<p>Medium term</p>	<p>LDP2 PMD1 h NPF4 part 1,3,5 LDP2 ED7</p>

⁶⁹ <https://www.ssdalliance.com/destination-development/dark-skies/>

THEME 2: ENHANCING FACILITIES: A GREAT PLACE TO LIVE AND WORK			
Strategic Objective: We will be a place with great facilities, where people of all ages enjoy a good standard of living and quality of life, and where local businesses can thrive			
PRIORITY AREAS: HOUSING, REPOPULATION, WORK, CONNECTIVITY			Relevant policy
1. Campaign for and source funding to improve existing housing stock energy efficiency	ULHCC SBC Sustainable Borders ⁷⁰ SOSE Local businesses	Long term	NPF4 all LDP2 HD2 LDP2 ED9 TLLP b ii
2. Promote access to affordable housing, social housing, retirement housing and accessible housing for people with disabilities.	SBC	Ongoing	LDP2 HD2 SBCP b LDP2 PMD3 NPF4 part 6 TLLP b ii
3. Identify derelict and unused buildings to renovate or repurpose Consider possibilities for community ownership of land and buildings	SOSE ULHCC	Long term	
4. Promote and support initiatives which return families and young people to the area.	SBC	Ongoing	NPF4 part 6 LDP2 HD2
5. Encourage and sustain local businesses, home working and social enterprises.	SBC	Ongoing	NPF4 part 3,5,6
6. Support improvements to necessary infrastructure, such as mobile phone coverage and fibre broadband.	ULHCC SBC	Ongoing	NPF4 part 5 LDP2 ED6 TLLP a 3
7. Maintain and improve communication and inclusivity within the community: ULHCC website/WhatsApp/email distribution	ULHCC	Short term	TLLP a 3 LDP2 PMD1 I LDP2 ED6

⁷⁰ <https://sustainableseelkirk.org.uk/about/>

THEME 3: A RESILIENT AND INVOLVED LOCAL COMMUNITY			
Strategic Objective: We will be a thriving community, involved in decision making in our area and where our assets can be of benefit to all people			
PRIORITY AREAS: <i>PHYSICAL ASSETS, COMMUNITY EVENTS</i>			Relevant policy
1. Support and develop community events, so that these are sustainable for the long-term future	HHC ULHCC Border Community Action SBC	Short term and ongoing	NPF4 part 2, 6 LDP2 PMD1 I TLLP c i TLLP b iii
2. Support and promote current and future community owned assets, including Hermitage Hall			
3. Support and promote the development of community gardens			
4. Maintain, develop and promote local resilience / community sheds and defibrillators, including but not limited to the following locations: a. Hermitage Hall; b. B6357 opposite Larriston; c. Twistlehope; d. near the Whitrope Visitor Centre e. Kielder road f. Singdean	ULHCC Resilience team	Short Term and ongoing	LDP2 ED6 TLLP c i

Theme 4:A sustainable, beautiful and accessible place			
Strategic Objective: Our environment will be well looked after, accessible to all, and will help our community move towards net zero			
PRIORITY AREAS: WALKING AND CYCLING, ROAD SAFETY, EVCHARGING AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT			Relevant policy
1. Planned traffic management and consultation particularly around infrastructure developments	SBC Developers	Ongoing and immediate in line with received applications	LDP2 PMD1 i LDP2 IS4
2. Develop active travel and local walking and cycle routes	ULHCC	Medium term	LDP2 PMD1 g NPF4 part 3
3. Creating, improving and widening footpaths for accessible access for all	SBC		
4. Encourage road improvements and maintenance of verges	Sustrans ⁷¹		
5. Encourage traffic control measures and road safety	Sustainable Borders ⁷² Other Community Councils		
6. Extend the provision of electric vehicle charging points	ULHCC HHC Developers	Medium term	LDP2 IS4
7. Engage with existing public transport providers to expand the service across our area	Telfords Borders Railway Campaign ⁷³ ULHCC SBC	Short term	SBCP a, c LDP2 IS4 LDP2 PMD1 g TLLP a i
8. Provide bus shelters	ULHCC SBC	Long term	
9. Develop community transport options	ULHCC TLRCA Borders Wheels ⁷⁴	Long term	
10. Engage in the potential development of a railway extension	Borders Railway Campaign ULHCC SBC	Long term	SBCP a, c LDP2 PMD1 g LDP2 IS4 TLLP a i

⁷¹ <https://www.sustrans.org.uk/about-us/our-work-in-scotland/>

⁷² <https://sustainableseelkirk.org.uk/about/>

⁷³ [News | CAMPAIGN FOR BORDERS RAIL | Building on success](#)

⁷⁴ <https://borderswheels.org.uk/community-transport/>

Theme 5: A great place to visit, connecting to other communities			
Strategic Objective: Our area will have excellent amenities for visitors, and be a great base for visitors to explore the South of Scotland and neighbouring communities			
PRIORITY AREAS: <i>TOURISM, VISITOR AMENITIES</i>			Relevant Policy
1. Review, develop and promote resources for local information, including maps, leaflets	ULHCC TLRCA SBC South of Scotland Destination Alliance (SSDA) ⁷⁵ Visit Scotland ⁷⁶ Scottish Community Tourism ⁷⁷ Other Community Councils	Medium term	LDP2 PMD1 c LDP2 PMD1 g LDP2 ED7 LDP2 ED8 TLLP a ii TLLP c i TLLP b iii
2. Identify, create and clear former paths and routes including <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Wheel Causeway Bloody Bush Larriston Waterfalls Waverley route 			
3. Support the maintenance and improvement of route signage		Short term	
4. Identify and develop suitable sites for benches and viewpoints			
5. Support development of existing tourist attractions and businesses	ULHCC Heritage Scotland Hermitage Castle Whitrope Heritage Centre	Medium term	LDP2 ED7 TLLP a ii
6. Develop and install information boards initially at Hermitage Hall and one on the B6357 opposite Larriston	ULHCC	Short term	LDP2 ED7 TLLP a ii
7. Support the identification of sites and provision of infrastructure for visitors, e.g. café provision, public toilets, cyclist support	ULHCC	Long term	LDP2 ED7 TLLP a ii
8. Explore collective marketing, including online presences ⁷⁸	ULHCC Neighbouring CC TLRCA SBC	Medium term	LDP2 ED6 LDP2 ED7 TLLP a iii

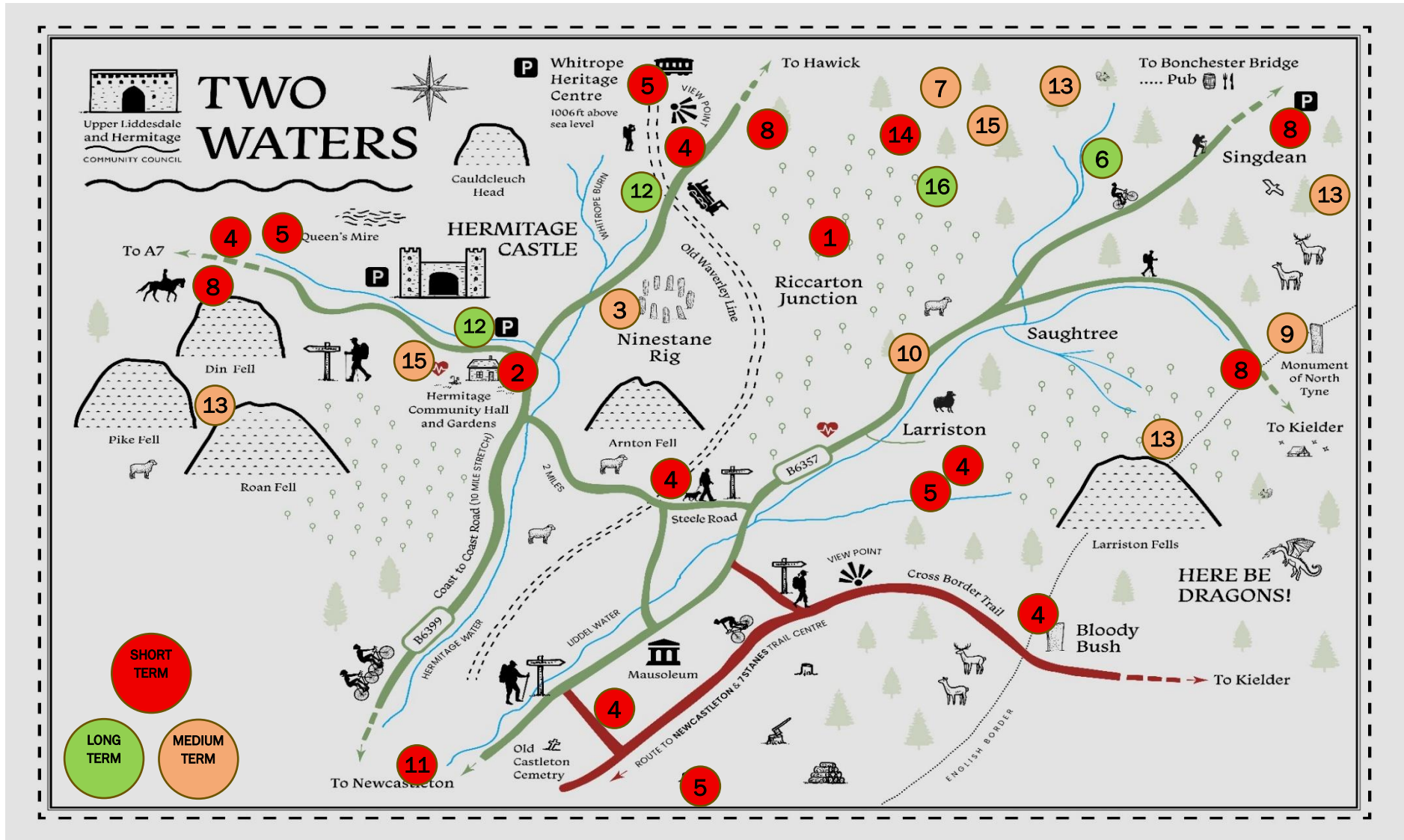
⁷⁵ <https://scotlandstartshere.com/destinations/teviot-eskdale-and-liddesdale/>

⁷⁶ <https://www.visitscotland.com/>

⁷⁷ <https://www.scoto.co.uk/>

⁷⁸ e.g. <http://www.rulewater.co.uk/> and <https://www.visitnewcastleton.com/>

6.4 Map of Projects (Land and Assets)



KEY TO PROJECT MAP

- 1 Land Use: **Project 1.1** : Ensure continued, meaningful consultation and scrutinisation of planning proposals for land use, such as forestry, windfarms and pylons
- 2 Hermitage Hall
Project 1.2 a and Project 3.3: Community garden support
Project 3.1: Support and develop community events
Project 3.2: Support and promote current community owned assets
- 3 Heritage Trail Development: **Project 1.3a:** Ninestane Rig and Buckstone
- 4 Walking, cycling, riding routes: Improved signage, information boards and leaflets
Projects 1.3 c,e,f: Bloody Bush, Oliver Mausoleum
Projects 5.1 to 3
Project 5.6: information board provision
- 5 Install Benches for walks and viewpoints at Sandy Edge, Billhope, Gorrenberry, Larriston, Steele Road, Bloody Bush: **Project 5.4:**
- 6 Improved Flood Management measures: **Project 1.5**
- 7 Gain Dark Skies accreditation: **Project 1.6**
- 8 Extend Resilience shed and defibrillator network **Project 3.4**
- 9 Development of Wheel causeway walking route **Project 1.3 b, 5.2a**
- 10 Traffic management and road safety measures **Project 4.1-5:** footpaths, cycle paths, maintenance of roads and verges
- 11 Public transport improvements **Projects 4.7-11:** improved bus services, Border Wheels, community options, Rail extension
- 12 Public toilet provision **Project 5.7:**
- 13 Improve and support natural environment:
Project 1.1: manage Infrastructure development
Project 1.3: Golden Eagle Project, Red Squirrel conservation, SSSI protection, bird hides, Owl box provision
- 14 Improved communication and connectivity **Projects 2.5,6,7 and 5.8**
- 15 Electric vehicle charger provision available to all **Project 4.6**
- 16 Improvements to housing stock:
Projects 2.1: Retrofitting of existing housing for net Zero
Project 2.2: suitable accommodation for all
Project 2.3: reuse of empty buildings, community ownership

6.5 Management and Governance

Upper Liddesdale and Hermitage Community Council will act as the lead body to monitor progression and implementation of this LPP. They will support the delivery of projects by community groups and relevant statutory bodies and will ensure continued engagement with Scottish Borders Council.

The Community Council will oversee the success of the Local Place Plan but will also be responsible for reviewing it periodically to respond to changes in the local environment, many of which we will not be able to envisage just now.

We want the plan to be clear and agreed, but there may be opportunities that emerge that will require the leadership of local community groups, encouraging on-going community involvement, volunteering and activism.

Upper Liddesdale and Hermitage Community Council will:

- Participate in the development of the actions identified in the Local Place Plan
- Stimulate and support other organisations to take on the actions identified in the Local Place Plan;
- Promote the Local Place Plan;
- Review progress;
- Monitor the impact of the Local Place Plan

7. Afterword

We are proud that we have developed this Local Place Plan, alongside our nearby Community Councils.

We want to thank the residents, businesses and organisations of our community who gave their time and ideas.

Thanks to those that gave permissions for photographs to be used.

Keep an eye on our website for more developments:

<https://www.ulhcc.scot/>

If you want to contact us directly, you can email us at:

ulhcommunitycouncil@gmail.com

Rosemary Webster

Place Plan Lead

Vice Chair

Upper Liddesdale and Hermitage Community Council

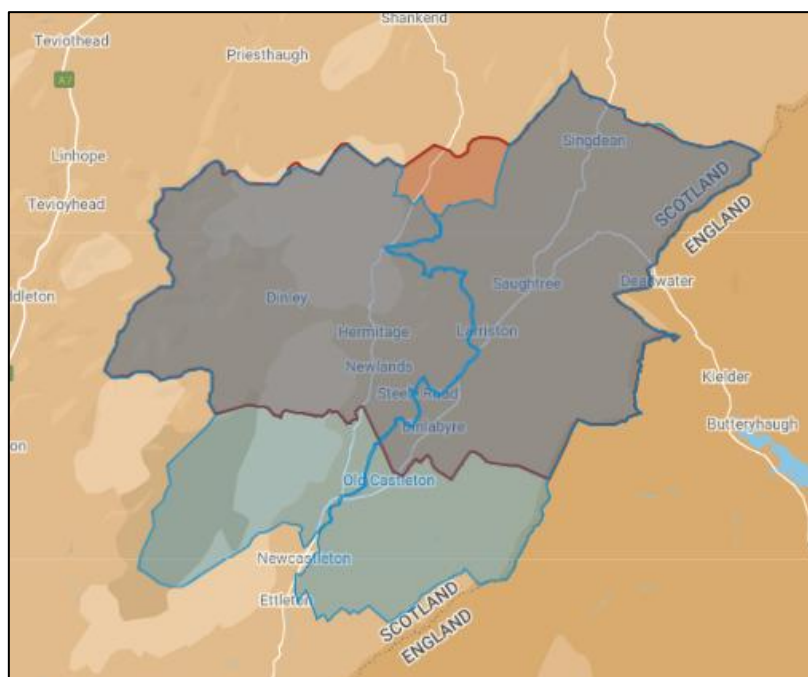
8. Appendices

8.1 Demographics

In 2023, a member of Upper Liddesdale and Hermitage Community Council compiled a demographic profile of the area, based on data from the 2011 Census⁷⁹. This profile combines and compares the 2011 and 2022 Census data.

The previous analysis noted, “The Upper Liddesdale and Hermitage Community Council area counted 218 people and 97 households in 2011. This is still the best estimate of the Community Council area we have available, as the area is too small to have its own Datazone.”

Similarly to the 2011 data, the 2022 data is based on these two output areas: S00174683 and S00174684. These generally cover the Community Council area, but do not fit it perfectly. The two data output areas are highlighted in blue in the image below. The red outline is the ULHCC area, for reference. The ULHCC area is still too small to have its own Datazone.



Population

	ULHCC 2011	ULHCC 2022	Scottish Borders 2022
Total Population	212	240	116,821
Number aged 0-15	36	20	18,221
Number aged 16-64	147	145	67,877
Number aged 65+	35	72	30,722
Percentage aged 0-15	16.4%	8.3%	15.6%

⁷⁹ Available online at https://www.ulhcc.scot/place_plan/index.htm with a direct download here: https://www.ulhcc.scot/documents/2011_Census_profile_ULHCC.pdf

Percentage aged 16-64	68%	60.4%	58.1%
Percentage aged 65+	15.6%	30%	26.3%

What do these statistics tell us?

- The number of children in the area has dropped from 36 to 20. The number of children across the Borders (proportionally) is higher than the current ULHCC area
- The number of people aged 16-64 (the working age) has fallen by 2, but the proportion of the population that is within this age bracket has fallen from 68% to 60.4%. This is roughly the same as the wider Borders area
- The area has seen the proportion of population aged 65+ almost double, going from 15.6% to 30%. The total number has risen from 35 to 72
- The ULHCC area has seen an overall decrease in young people and an increase in pensioners

Ethnic Identity

The ethnicity data for 2022 was as follows:

Ethnic background	ULHCC 2022	Scotland
White	98.75%	92.87%
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	0.42%	1.12%
Asian, Asian Scottish or Asian British	0.42%	3.90%
African, African Scottish or African British	0.00%	1.08%
Caribbean or Black	0.00%	0.12%
Other ethnic groups	0.00%	0.91%

This is broadly the same as the 2011 data, which showed over 99% of those in the ULHCC area identifying as White.

Religion and Place of Worship

Religion	ULHCC 2011	ULHCC 2022	Scotland 2022
Church of Scotland	33%	17.50%	20.36%
Roman Catholic	5%	2.50%	13.30%
Other Christian	11%	13.33%	5.13%
Buddhist	N/A	0.42%	0.28%
Hindu	N/A	0.00%	0.55%
Jewish	N/A	0.00%	0.11%
Muslim	N/A	0.00%	2.20%
Sikh	N/A	0.00%	0.20%

Pagan	N/A	0.00%	0.35%
Other religion	N/A	0.00%	0.23%
No religion	40%	57.08%	51.12%
Not stated	11%	9.58%	6.16%

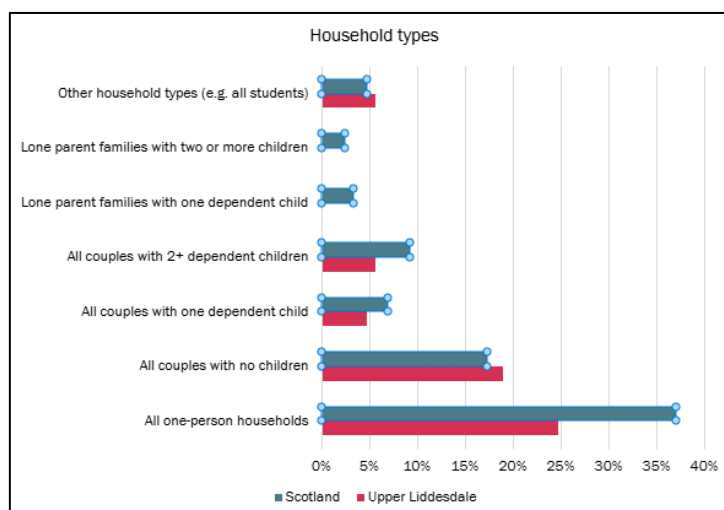
What do these statistics tell us?

- As was the case in 2011, ULHCC is almost completely ethnically homogeneous, with little ethnic diversity
- Christianity is a minority religion, with only 33% identifying as some form of Christianity and 57% of the population stating they have no religion or 9.6% not stating a religion at all
- The only non-Christian religion to have any presences is Buddhism, with .42% of the population identify as Buddhists

Household Structure

There were 105 households in 2022, compared to 97 in the 2011 Census.

	ULHCC 2011	ULHCC 2022	Scotland 2022
All one-person households	38%	25%	37%
Couple households with no children	24%	19%	17%
Couple households with dependent children	22%	10.5% (includes 1 or more children)	16%
Household is 65+	18% (single or couple)	14% (only one-person households)	14% (only one-person households)



What do these statistics tell us?

- Despite seeing an overall increase in households (97 > 105), the proportion of family households (couples with children) has gone down.
- The proportion of single person pensioner households has gone down, but we do not have the statistics for the couple households to know how many are over the age of 65 years.

Household Tenure

	ULHCC 2011	ULHCC 2022	Scotland 2022
All owned	55%	69%	63%
Socially rented	2%	0%	22.5%
Privately rented	20%	15%	12%

What do these statistics tell us?

- The proportion of homes owned (outright or with a mortgage) in the ULHCC area has increased and the proportion of privately rented homes has decreased
- There are no socially rented homes

Additionally, of the 105 households in the ULHCC area in 2022, 100 of these are houses/bungalows, approximately 95%. This is higher than the national average of 65.5% house/bungalow accommodation type.

Health

People who say they are...	ULHCC 2011	ULHCC 2022	Scotland
In very good health	88%	50.42%	47.95%
In good health	(good or very good)	31.67%	30.89%
In fair health	N/A	13.75%	14.22%
In bad health	3%	3.33%	5.30%
In very bad health	(bad or very bad)	0.83%	1.64%
People whose day-to-day activities are limited by disability	ULHCC 2011	ULHCC 2022	Scotland
limited a lot	4%	6.25%	10.76%
limited a little	12%	18.33%	13.34%
not limited at all	84%	75.00%	75.90%
People with long-term health conditions and disabilities	ULHCC 2011	ULHCC 2022	Scotland
Deaf or hearing impaired	N/A	8.33%	7.12%

Blind or vision impaired	N/A	3.33%	2.53%
Difficulty speaking	N/A	0.00%	0.31%
Physical disability	N/A	11.25%	9.66%
Mental health condition	N/A	7.08%	11.34%
Long-term illness or condition	N/A	23.33%	21.39%

	ULHCC 2011	ULHCC 2022	Scotland 2022
All who provide unpaid care	10%	11%	11.9%
Provide up to 19hrs of unpaid care	6%	6.8%	6.6%
Provide over 20hrs of unpaid care	4%	3.4%	5.2%

What do these statistics tell us?

- The overall proportion of the population who identify as being in good health has fallen slightly since 2011, but current numbers are comparable to the rest of Scotland
- The proportion of the population who day-to-day activities are limited has risen from 2011 to 2022
- The proportion of the population who provide unpaid care hasn't changed significantly from 2011 to 2022, and is similar to the national average

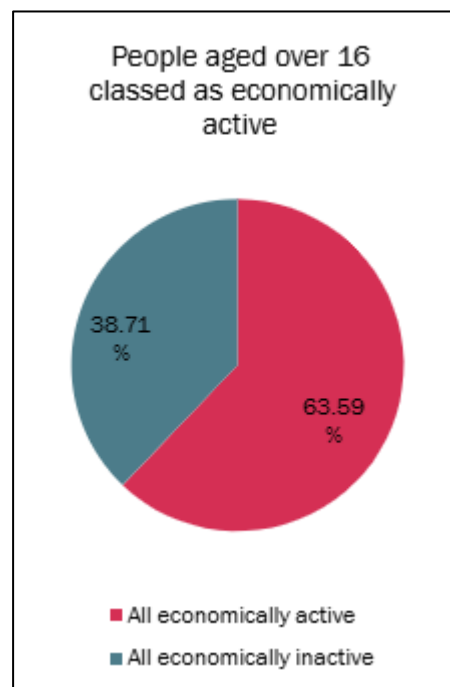
Economic Activity and Inactivity

ULHCC 2011	ULHCC 2022 - Themes		Scotland 2022
71%	63.59% People classed as economically active include:		56.9%
	37.79%	who are employees, of which:	47.6%
27%		25.81% work full-time	36.1%
10%		11.52% work part-time	11.5%
33%	23.96%	who are self-employed, of which:	
		4.61% have employees	1.6%
		19.35% have no employees	5.9%
<1%	2.30%	who are unemployed and available for work	1.9%
<1%	0%	Economically active full-time students	4%
29%	38.71% People classed as economically inactive include:		39%
18%	29.95%	who are retired	23%
2%	4.15%	full-time students	4.9%
3%	3.23%	looking after home or family	3.4%

2%	0.46%	Long-term sick or disabled	5%
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What do these statistics tell us?

- People classed as economically active has fallen slightly from 2011 to 2022, 71% to approximately 64%
- The proportion of people who are full-time employees in the ULHCC area is lower than the national average
- The proportion of people who are self-employed has dropped from 2011 to 2022, from 33% to roughly 24%
- The proportion of the population that are classed as economically inactive has risen from 2011 to 2022, from 29% to roughly 39%
- Per the 2022 census, the proportion of the population that is retired has risen from 18% to 29%, and is slightly higher than the national average

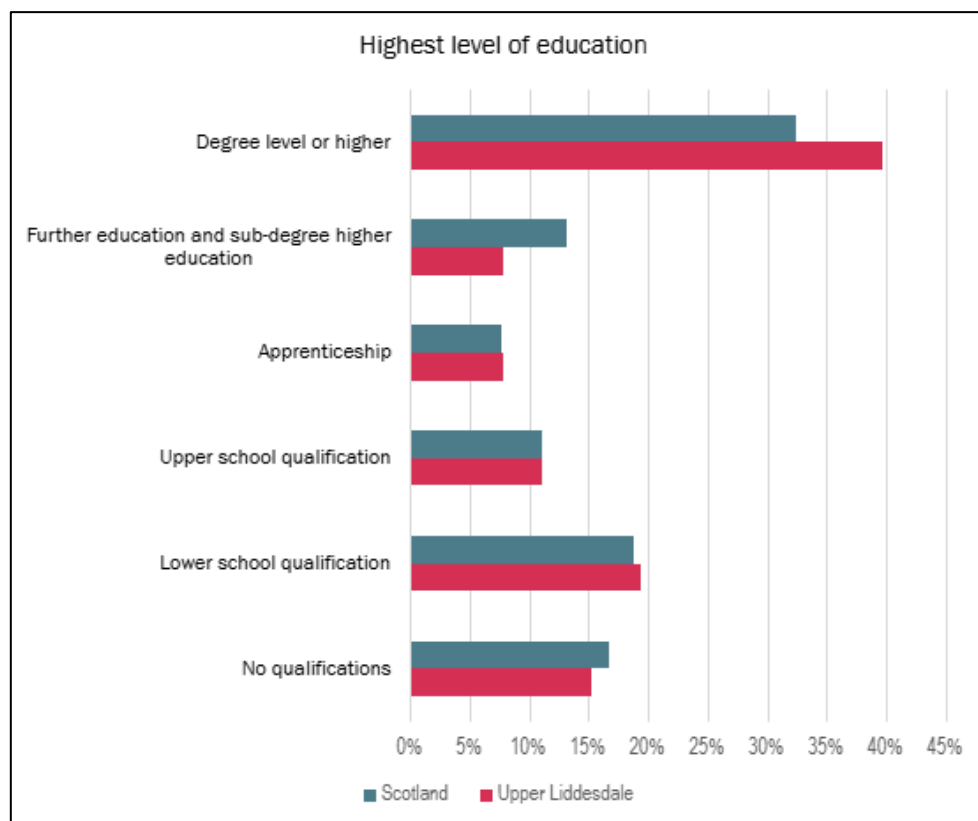


Level of Education

Highest Level of Qualification	ULHCC 2022	Scotland 2022
No qualification	15.2%	16.65%
Lower school qualification	19.35%	18.86%
Upper school qualification	11.06%	11.14%
Apprenticeship	7.83%	7.65%
Further education and sub-degree higher education	7.83%	13.24%
Degree level or higher	39.63%	32.47%

What do these statistics tell us?

- The ULHCC has a slightly higher rate of individuals with a university degree or higher than the national average, 39.63% versus 32.47%
- There is a sizeable proportion of the population with only a lower school qualification or no qualification in the ULHCC area, approximately 34.55%



Access to a vehicle

	ULHCC 2022	Scotland 2022
No cars or vans	2.86%	26.37%
1 car or van	31.43%	43.11%
2 cars or vans	37.14%	23.6%
3 cars or vans	15.24%	5.16%
4 or more cars or vans	8.6%	1.8%

What do these statistics tell us?

- 2.9% of households have no access to a car or van. This is lower than the national average of 26.4%, but not surprising given the rural setting of the ULHCC area. However, for those households, it is likely to be a significant disadvantage, given the limitations of public transport in the area.
- The proportion of households with 2 cars or vans is higher than the national average, 37% versus 23.6%. This likely represents the large number of couple households with both individuals having a car.

8.2 Hermitage Hall Community Garden



8.3 Community Survey

Copy of survey

**UPPER LIDDESDALE AND HERMITAGE
COMMUNITY SURVEY
2023**

Your Community has been asked to produce a Community Plan or "Place Plan" to inform the Community council, the Scottish Borders Council and wider government of our needs and wants. This should help us to focus on projects and developments to **enhance our amenities and surroundings** to meet your requirements and desires as well as support our responses to developments in the area.

This requires the help of all our community; our residents, visitors, people of all ages, workers in the area, those in neighbouring communities who use facilities here.

We want to hear your views so your Community Council is requesting that you complete a small survey. This can be returned in a number of ways

- ❖ **On paper**
 - Posted to the mailbox at [Hermitage Hall](#) (stamped addressed envelope provided)
 - Passed to a member of the Community Council
- ❖ **emailed to** consultation@ulhcc.scot
- ❖ **online at** https://www.ulhcc.scot/place_plan_survey.htm

WHAT ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS TO ADDRESS IN OUR COMMUNITY?

NUMBER IN ORDER OF IMPORTANCE (1 THE MOST IMPORTANT)

PUBLIC TRANSPORT	<input type="checkbox"/>	ROADS	<input type="checkbox"/>
MOBILE SIGNAL/BROADBAND	<input type="checkbox"/>	HOUSING	<input type="checkbox"/>
EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES	<input type="checkbox"/>	CRIME	<input type="checkbox"/>
TOURISM	<input type="checkbox"/>	FACILITIES <small>(please specify)</small>	<input type="checkbox"/>
LOCAL LAND USE	<input type="checkbox"/>	OTHER <small>(please specify)</small>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		FLOODING	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please feel free to add additional notes and comments in the box at the end

WHAT ARE YOUR VIEWS ON FORESTRY IN OUR COMMUNITY AND NEIGHBOURING AREAS?

WHAT ARE YOUR VIEWS ON WIND FARM DEVELOPMENTS IN OUR COMMUNITY AND NEIGHBOURING AREAS?

**UPPER LIDDESDALE AND HERMITAGE
COMMUNITY SURVEY
2023**

WHAT DOES OUR COMMUNITY NEED TO START MOVING TOWARDS NET ZERO?

WHAT AGE ARE YOU.....?

UNDER 10	<input type="checkbox"/>
10 TO 14	<input type="checkbox"/>
15 TO 20	<input type="checkbox"/>
20 TO 30	<input type="checkbox"/>
30 TO 40	<input type="checkbox"/>
40 TO 50	<input type="checkbox"/>
50 TO 60	<input type="checkbox"/>
60 TO 70	<input type="checkbox"/>
70 +	<input type="checkbox"/>

ARE YOU.....?

RESIDENT IN THE COMMUNITY	<input type="checkbox"/>
WORKING IN THE COMMUNITY	<input type="checkbox"/>
REGULAR VISITOR E.G. 2 ND HOME	<input type="checkbox"/>
TOURIST/OCCASIONAL VISITOR	<input type="checkbox"/>

IF YOU WORK IN ULHCC OR NEIGHBOURING COMMUNITIES, WHAT DO YOU DO?

FARMING	<input type="checkbox"/>	TOURISM	<input type="checkbox"/>	RETIRED	<input type="checkbox"/>
WORK FROM HOME	<input type="checkbox"/>	CARING	<input type="checkbox"/>	GAMEKEEPING	<input type="checkbox"/>
OTHER.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	FORESTRY	<input type="checkbox"/>	STUDENT	<input type="checkbox"/>

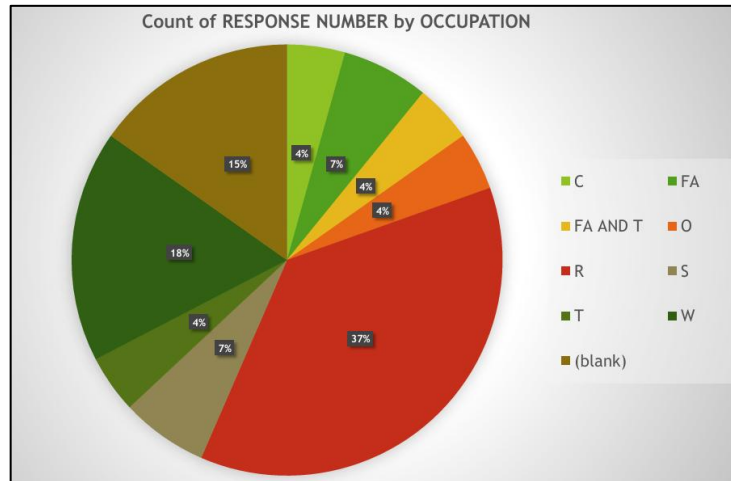
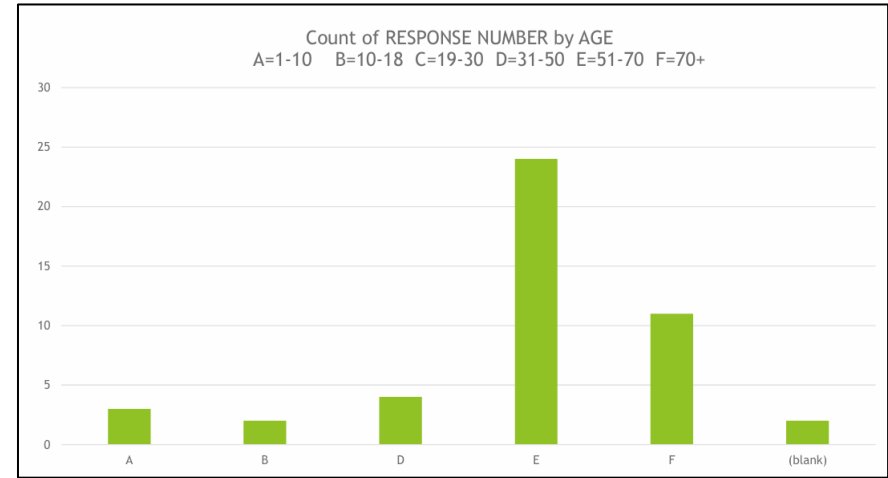
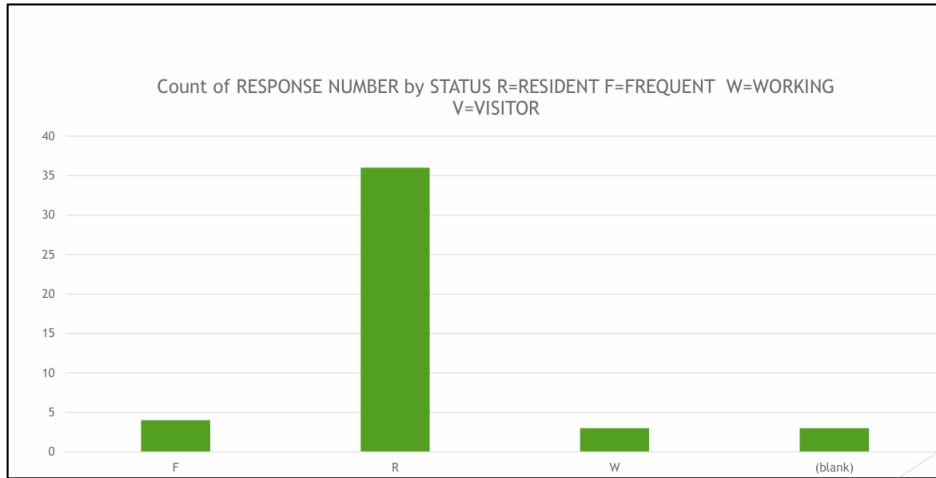
WHAT ARE THE BEST THINGS ABOUT UPPER LIDDESDALE AND HERMITAGE?

AND WHAT ARE THE WORST THINGS ABOUT IT?

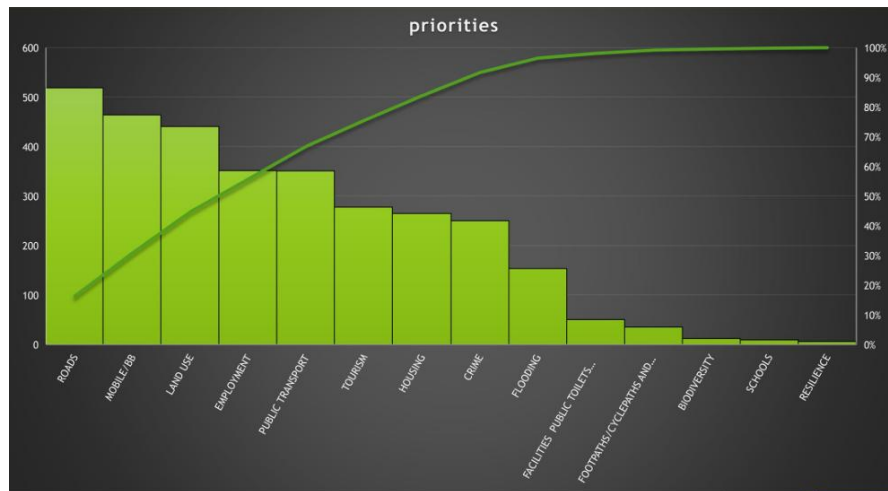
2023 CLOSING DATE 30TH APRIL

Thank you for taking the time to fill in this survey. This information will not be passed onto any other third party and will be destroyed once the results are collated.

Survey results⁸⁰



⁸⁰ As presented to the Community Council meeting on the 13th of July 2023



WORST THINGS

LANDUSE	ROADS	UTILITIES	FACILITIES	OTHER
TRACKS ARE UGLY LOG LORRIES TURBINE APPLICATIONS FUTURE TREE PLANTING PLANS UNBROKEN PINE PLANTATIONS REDUCTION OF FARMLANDS	LACK OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT RELIANT ON CARS RAILWAY EXTENSION ROADS AS RACE TRACKS NOISE POLLUTION MAINTENANCE, POTHOLES, VERGES SAFETY CLOSURES, DIVERSIONS LOG LORRIES, MOTORBIKES, SUPERCARS TOURISTS, CAMPERVANS	MOBILE COVERAGE POOR BROADBAND COVERAGE WATER QUALITY POWER CUTS REMOTENESS AND RESILIENCE	PUBLIC TRANSPORT REFUSE COLLECTION POOR AMENITIES LACK OF SHOPS LACK OF PUB NO DENTISTS HOSPITAL WAITING TIMES REMOTENESS LIMITED SOCIAL LIFE LITTER AND HUMAN WASTE PUBLIC RUBBISH AND DOG POO BINS	TENSIONS IN A DIVIDED COMMUNITY INCOMERS WITH LOADS OF MONEY TAKING OVER WEATHER WET PEOPLE TRYING TO CHANGE THE WAY WE LIVE DOG CONTROL CLIQUES OF PEOPLE LACK OF JOB OPPORTUNITIES DOG POO

WIND FARMS

- ▶ SHOULD BE BLOCKED
- ▶ TOO MANY APPLICATIONS IN THE BORDERS
- ▶ UNSIGHTLY MONSTROSITIES
- ▶ DISTURBING NATURAL FLORA AND FAUNA
- ▶ DAMAGE ENVIRONMENT AND LOCAL SOCIO-ECONOMIC STABILITY
- ▶ SHOULD BE SITUATED WHERE NEEDED
- ▶ INDUSTRIAL SCALE DEVELOPMENT WITH NO CONSIDERATION...FOR DESTRUCTION
- ▶ DISRUPTION ON ROADS
- ▶ RUIN THE MAGIC OF NATURAL LANDSCAPE
- ▶ THREAT TO LOCAL TOURIST INDUSTRY
- ▶ HYDROELECTRIC ONLY GREEN WAY
- ▶ GOOD BUT VISUALLY CHALLENGING
- ▶ I WOULD LIKE TO KNOW MORE
- ▶ BETTER THAN FORESTS
- ▶ REIMBURSED DIRECTLY FOR THESE IMPACTS
- ▶ I DON'T MIND THEM

FORESTRY

- ▶ Commercial forests destroy the farming communities that were once there
- ▶ Invading moorland and peat
- ▶ Monoculture sitka spruce forests not owned by local people
- ▶ Hate it
- ▶ Retrograde step
- ▶ Local farming should be supported
- ▶ Lorry movements have a negative impact on the roads
- ▶ Affects biodiversity
- ▶ Important for the local economy and land use
- ▶ I like trees
- ▶ I support the replanting schemes in the area
- ▶ No issues

WHAT DO WE NEED TO MOVE TOWARDS NET ZERO.....

- ▶ **Don't bother**
 - ▶ Climate change a giant hoax
 - ▶ We will never reach it
 - ▶ Scotland's contribution to emissions is minimal so not worth doing
 - ▶ No answer
 - ▶ Unrealistic goals
- ▶ **Food**
 - ▶ Everyone should be vegan
 - ▶ Produce vegan alternatives
 - ▶ Local production
 - ▶ Grow your own/community gardens
 - ▶ Farming diversity
- ▶ **Transport**
 - ▶ Reinststate train
 - ▶ Car share
 - ▶ Better and cleaner public transport
 - ▶ Safer roads to encourage cycling
- ▶ **Power, fuel**
 - ▶ Grants for solar
 - ▶ Small scale hydro
 - ▶ Insulation
 - ▶ Maintain resilience
 - ▶ Improved EV charging points
 - ▶ Local wood pellet and biomass production
 - ▶ Upgrade of electricity supply/infrastructure
 - ▶ Local PV and wind generation of electricity on a steading or community basis
- ▶ **Better recycling provision**
- ▶ **Trusted suppliers/buiders etc**
- ▶ **100% government funding for any retro fitting of older properties**
- ▶ **Protect peat bogs**
- ▶ **Amount of trees in our community**

8.4 Community Council Minutes

The minutes of Community Council meetings from January 2023 to November 2024 have been reviewed to summarise key issues arising, to ensure these are reflected in this Local Place Plan. The issues were:

Land / estate management

- Stalking / Deer Management Policy (Tilhill⁸¹)
- Shooting Policy & Safety Procedures (Buccleuch⁸²)
- Blackburn & Hartsgarth⁸³

Wind farms / energy schemes

- Windy Edge wind farm, EnergieKontor
- Teviot Wind Farm
- Liddesdale wind farm, EDF
- Pines Burn wind farm
- SSEN Cross-Border Connection Project⁸⁴

National policies

- National Park proposals
- Flood risk management in woodlands and forests⁸⁵

Local projects

- Installation of resilience sheds⁸⁶ and benches
- Potential of installation of information boards, one at Hermitage Hall and one at the Resilience Shed on the B6357 opposite Larriston
- Potential of creating a dedicated heritage trail and improved access to Ninestane Rig stone circle, together with Forestry and Land Scotland (landowner) and Historic Environment Scotland (who would deal with listing it as an ancient monument)
- Designation of the Twae Rings settlement as a National Monument
- 7 Stanes bike track – Forestry Land Scotland future plans for extending the cycle and walking paths in the area

⁸¹ <https://www.tilhill.com/>

⁸² <https://www.buccleuch.com/about-us/borders-estate/>

⁸³ <https://www.oxygenconservation.com/portfolio/blackburn-hartsgarth/>

⁸⁴ https://www.spenergynetworks.co.uk/pages/cross_border_connection.aspx

⁸⁵ <https://cdn.forestresearch.gov.uk/2022/10/UKFSPG027.pdf>

⁸⁶ <https://www.ulhcc.scot/resilience/index.htm>