

Technical Note – Employment Land

National Strategy and Policies

Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) sets out the Scottish Government's policies in relation to economic development in Scotland. The policy states that Local Authorities should respond to the diverse needs and locational requirements of different sectors and sizes of businesses and take a flexible approach to ensure that changing circumstances can be accommodated and new economic opportunities realised. SPP requires Local Authorities to ensure that there is a range and choice of marketable sites and locations for businesses allocated in development plans, including opportunities for mixed use development, to meet anticipated requirements and a variety of size and quality requirements. It states that marketable land should meet business requirements, be serviced or serviceable within 5 years, be accessible by walking, cycling and public transport, and have a secure planning status. The supply of marketable sites should be regularly reviewed.

Strategic Development Plan

The Strategic Development Plan (SDP) will replace the consolidated Scottish Borders Structure Plan and the Local Development Plan (LDP) requires to be consistent with it. The proposed SDP has been produced by SESPlan in November 2011 and put out for public consultation. In terms of economic development the SDP provides a means to support job creation through setting a spatial strategy with a focus on growing key sectors in a sustainable manner. It requires that LDP's must maintain a supply of employment land allocations to meet changing demand and should respond to the diverse needs and locational requirements of different sectors by ensuring that there is a generous range and choice of employment sites which are highly accessible to communities across the SESPlan area.

The proposed SDP states that LDP's should acknowledge and identify circumstances in which non-conforming uses may be appropriate on strategic employment sites. This includes ancillary and support services and other uses which could be complimentary to an employment land setting and could include, for example, waste uses. While housing and retail development on strategic employment sites will normally be resisted, the development of mixed use communities (with residential and employment opportunities jointly provided) on strategic employment sites may be appropriate provided this is justified through a LDP and does not result in a net loss to the overall strategic employment land supply.

The proposed SDP identifies the following sectors to be of strategic importance to the economy of the SESPlan area : financial and business services, higher education and the commercialisation of research, energy, tourism, life sciences, creative industries, food and drink and enabling (digital) technologies.

Scottish Borders Consolidated Local Plan 2011

The Scottish Borders Consolidated Local Plan 2011 sets out the employment land policies for the area. Policy ED1: Protection of Employment Land, aims to ensure that adequate supplies of employment land are retained for business and industrial use and are not diluted by a proliferation of other uses. The policy recognises the financial difficulty in bringing forward new employment land within a rural area such as the Scottish Borders where the business economic case is often weak and therefore seeks to protect existing resources into the long term. The policy gives rigorous protection of strategic sites for business and industry, but recognises that there may be limited extenuating circumstances which would allow consideration of redevelopment to other uses. However, retailing is not considered to be an appropriate use on industrial estates other than for small scale ancillary use. The consolidated Local Plan identifies land uses including: safeguarded employment, employment (both brownfield and greenfield), mixed use and redevelopment sites.

Scottish Borders Economic Strategy

The draft Economic Blueprint for the Scottish Borders supports raising innovation and skill levels, promoting enterprise and business by focusing on key sectors within the economy, improving connectivity including IT and moving towards a low carbon economy, improving business infrastructure, and maximising town centre and activity tourism.

Employment Land Audit

The Scottish Borders Council (SBC) Employment Land Audit is produced to monitor the supply, take up and status of employment land within the Scottish Borders, in line with National Guidance. The audit assesses the range and choice of marketable sites and locations for businesses with a variety of size and quality requirements. The audit identifies the availability and constraints of employment land sites within the Scottish Borders.

The Employment Land Audit 2010 recorded information on employment land supply at 31 March 2010 and land taken up between 1 April 2009 to 31 March 2010. In order to monitor the changing pattern of employment and economic activity within the Scottish Borders the audit is updated annually. SBC has undertaken an Employment Land Audit since 2007.

Methodology for Employment Land Audit

The audit identifies the established employment land supply which includes:

- Land allocated for employment use (undeveloped or under construction) **OR**
- Land allocated for mixed use/re-development that has the potential to be developed for employment use (undeveloped or under construction)

The 2010 audit took into account employment sites brought forward as part of the Local Plan Amendment.

The survey remains managed through a database that holds information relating to the unique reference, settlement, site name, existing use, planning status, availability, quality and site servicing.

Current Land Supply

78no sites were surveyed as being within the established employment land supply and table 1 confirms the findings 2010 Audit.

Table 1 – Current Employment Land Supply

	2008	2009	2010	% change since 2009
Scottish Borders	78.9ha	77.6ha	116.5ha	50%

This increase in land supply is largely as a result of the new sites which were allocated for employment land as part of the Local Plan Amendment process (see figure 4). Table 2 breaks down the 2010 figure by Strategic Development Areas (SDA).

Table 2 – Employment Land Supply by Strategic Development Area

SDA	Established Land Supply (ha)
Western	1.9
Central	83.9
Berwickshire	19.2
Landward	11.5
Total	116.5

The Employment Land Audit also seeks to establish what the land take up is. This identifies where demand is, and consequently indicates where new employment land allocations are likely to be required to satisfy the projected need. Table 3 confirms land take-up of each settlement within each SDA.

Table 3 – Employment Land Take-up

SDA	Settlement	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Berwickshire	Chirnside	0	0	0	0	0.1
	Duns	0.7	0.1	2.2	0.6	0.5
	Eyemouth	0	0.3	0	0	0.4
	Total	0.7	0.4	2.2	0.6	1.0
Central	Earlston	0	0	0	0	0
	Galashiels	0	0	0	0	0
	Hawick	0.2	0	0	0	0
	Jedburgh	0.2	0	0	0	0
	Kelso	0	0	0.3	0	0
	Newtown St Boswells	0	0.1	0	0	0
	Selkirk	0.3	0.1	1.3	0.3	0.5
	St Boswells	0.2	0	0	0	1.4
	Tweedbank	0	0	0	0.5	0
	Total	0.9	0.2	1.6	0.8	1.9
Western	Innerleithen	0	0	0	0	0.1
	Peebles	0	2.2	0.2	1.4	0
	Total	0	2.2	0.2	1.4	0.1
Landward		-	0.2	0.3	0	1.7
	Total	-	0.2	0.3	0	1.7
Scottish Borders		1.6	3.0	4.3	2.8	4.7

New Sites

In 2008 Scottish Enterprise appointed Ryden consultants to do a study on employment land business provision within the Scottish Borders. The report along with the Council's own monitoring process via the Employment land Audit acknowledged the limited supply of serviced employment land as well as the market conditions make which make it very difficult for the private sector to deliver the required product. The main conclusion was that there was a need to allocate further employment land within certain parts of the Borders. This included land within the central hub, particularly Galashiels, and land at Peebles. The Council took cognisance of the report and along with the findings of the employment land audit's figures on employment land

supply and take up, proceeded to consider the allocation of further employment land within the Scottish Borders. Consequently the sites allocated via the Local Plan Amendment process, including the high amenity site at Tweed Horizons as proposed by the Scottish Government reporter, are listed in table 4.

Table 4 – Sites Allocated for Employment Use via Local Plan Amendment

Settlement	Site Name	Site Area (ha)
Coldstream	Lennel Mount North	7.2
Eyemouth	Gunsgreenhill	6.3
Earlston	Townhead	4.6
Galashiels	Galafoot	2.6
Galashiels	Langhaugh Employment safeguard	0.9
Hawick	North West Burnfoot	5.0
Hawick	Gala Law North	9.4
Jedburgh	Wildcat Wood extension	8.0
Kelso	Wooden Linn	3.2
Lauder	North Lauder Industrial Estate	2.0
Morebattle	Croft Industrial Estate and extension	1.2
Newtown St Boswells	Tweed Horizons	13.9
Total		63.4 ha

Given the existing employment land supply stated in table 2 and the employment take up stated in tables 3, it is considered the new allocations in table 4 adequately address current demand in these areas and it is not considered the LDP process needs to identify much more employment land. However, a priority of the LPA was to find appropriate employment land within the western SDA. Consequently 2no sites totalling 5.3 ha in size were proposed at the existing employment site at South Park which is located on the western side of the town. However, the Scottish Government Reporter ultimately recommended that these proposed sites were removed, primarily on access grounds relating to the ability of Caledonian Road to satisfactorily accommodate further vehicles. Consequently these sites were removed from the Plan, and part of the LDP must seek to address this shortfall of land and allocate alternative land within the western SDA, or at least within proximity to Peebles.

Site within the western SDA

Finding a suitable site within Peebles is problematic given the physical constraints within the town, which includes flood risk and access issues. Consequently, only one area within the town is identified as a preferred option. This is within part of the longer term site (ref SPEEB005) located in the south east. The development of SPEEB005 is dependant on the formation of a new bridge across the River Tweed to relieve traffic congestion on the existing bridge and within the town. A study is in the process of considering the best option for locating this new bridge and it is expected the preferred route will be confirmed by the spring of 2012. The financing and time scale for building the bridge are issues, although it is hoped that this would be resolved before the land is developed for employment purposes. However, the possibility of developing this employment area in advance of the bridge being built has been considered and is considered an option.

As realistic options are problematic to identify within the town, consideration was given to considering sites in proximity to the town. A site at Eshiels was considered. Whilst the site is prominent, it has good connection links being located immediately adjacent to the A72 but is costly to access, and it is opposite the Council Depot and the sewage works which have existing employment land uses. Planting would screen the site to some degree.

Another option was considered at Cardrona. Cardrona now has a large population base and is easily accessible from the A72. Part of the development boundary of the site incorporates vacant land identified in the village masterplan for commercial development on the western side, and it is considered this land could be used and extended to accommodate a mixed use site which would include employment land provision.

The options at Peebles and Cardrona have consequently been chosen as part of the MIR for consultation and public opinion.

Site at Central SDA

Given the development of the railway station at Tweedbank, it is considered appropriate and desirable to allocate employment land within close proximity to the station. This would be beneficial in terms of likely demand due to the attractiveness of its proximity to the station and in the best interests of reducing travel and general sustainability objectives.

At present the layout of the Industrial Estate means that much of the land is underused and not as efficient or effective as it could be. It is considered that the restructuring and remodelling of some land and buildings could make better use of the overall site. There is also an area of land which sits between the eastern site of the railway terminal and the western site of the employment land allocation. This land could be considered for development purposes, and could be considered for mixed use which would include some employment land. This is considered the Council's preferred approach.

The Council has previously investigated the suitability of allocating further employment land near the railway station as part of the Local Plan Amendment. Ultimately a large site measuring some 19.6 ha was identified at Broomilees. However, the Reporter recommended the site was removed from the plan, largely on the grounds of the scale of the proposed area and its impact on this sensitive landscape, and also its prominence from the Melrose bypass. The Reporter proposed that the Broomilees site should be taken out the Plan and proposed another high amenity employment site at Tweed Horizons. These recommendations were agreed by the Council.

It is considered that the Broomilees site remains as having development potential and could be considered again, at least as an alternative small scale option to the aforesaid preferred option. However, clearly cognisance of the Reporter's previous reasons for opposing the site must be fully addressed, and consideration should be given to considering a smaller, less prominent and sensitive location within the overall initial proposed site. There is also the possibility that the site could also be used for the benefit of the Borders General Hospital to improve their facilities, as the overall site is at capacity which offers few opportunities for expansion opportunities. The Council are currently discussing the feasibility of this with the Hospital. Consequently this alternative mixed use option should be considered as part of the MIR process.

Mixed Use / Hierarchy of Sites

There are instances where it can be problematic to identify appropriate sites for certain proposed land uses. This is often due to the particular proposed use, its scale and the local search area. Existing employment sites are often the subject of such proposals, but the existing policy ED1 within the consolidated Local Plan predominantly seeks to safeguard all employment sites from non-employment uses.

Consequently, consideration could be given to allowing some mixed use proposals within some employment sites. Although it is considered that strategic and major employment sites should continue to be protected under policy ED1 where the proposed use does not directly support the function of the estate, other employment sites could be considered for such uses. For clarification, policy ED1 supports the following uses identified within the Use Classes (Scotland) Order 1997 – Class 4 (office, light industry and research and development), Class 5 (General Industry) and Class 6 (Storage and Distribution). Alternative uses which would fall within the criteria of being appropriate mixed use within employment areas would include e.g. waste management facilities, car showrooms, other “sui generis” uses. All new mixed use proposals would need to be considered on their own merits, although stand alone retail uses would not be supported. However, a degree of retail use can be supported under policy ED1 provided it is directly related to the main use of the business and it does not take up more than 10% of the total floor area.

In order to consider which employment sites may be appropriate for mixed use development, a hierarchy of all the sites has been drafted in table 5. This

takes cognisance of a number of site characteristics which can be used to ultimately indicate which sites merit full protection by policy ED1 to those which could allow some mixed use within them. In order to form the hierarchy, each site was tested and marked against 4no chosen criteria.

Each of the 4no criteria are listed below along with a methodology as to how the scoring system has been carried out within table 5. It should be noted that it was considered that out of the 4no identified criteria the **quality of site** and **accessibility** carry more weight and consequently the scoring within these two categories has been doubled up.

The 4no criteria tests are as follows:

Local Land Supply – Consideration was given as to how much employment land is available within the local area. The more land available, there may be a higher likelihood of alternative mixed use being allowed. However, it is considered that new employment land sites added via the Local Plan Amendment as listed in table 4 were allocated to satisfy a local demand and it would not be desirable to dilute these new employment land allocations with alternative uses. Consequently this is noted and reflected within the scoring system.

Scoring system in table 5 : Low level of available employment land = A, Medium level of available employment land = B , High level of available employment land = C

Local Land Take-up – This takes cognisance of land take up over the last 5 years. If there is a high take up in the area of employment land then it is more preferable to give sufficient protection to the existing supply.

Scoring system in table 5 : High = A, Medium = B, Low = C

Quality of Site – Consideration was given to as to how attractive a site may be for a potential employment land development. This should also take cognisance of, for example, the availability of existing infrastructure, flood risk, contamination

Scoring system in table 5 : High Amenity = AA, Good = BB, Medium = CC, Low = DD

Accessibility – Consideration was given to how accessible the site is, taking cognisance of its proximity to main routes, potential population workforce and other settlements. Good accessibility should encourage employment and consequently sites with better accessibility score higher.

Scoring system in table 5 : Good = AA, Medium = BB, Poor = CC

Having carried out the scoring system for each site, an overall designation was given for each site. The designation comprises of 3no groups which ultimately give confirmation as to which sites merit full protection from mixed use sites, where mixed use sites *may* be supported, and sites where mixed used would be supported. This is confirmed as follows :

Strategic (predominant score of A within table 5) – All employment sites to be safeguarded under policy ED1 for Use Classes 4, 5 and 6 only

District – (predominant score of B within table 5) Although employment sites are primarily to be safeguarded under policy ED1 for Use Classes 4, 5 and 6, mixed use *may* be supported provided an appropriate case is submitted by any applicant

Local – (predominant score of C within table 5) Alternative mixed uses are likely to be supported

Table 5 - Employment Site Classification

	Local Land Supply	Local Land Take up	Quality of site	Accessibility	Overall Classification	Designation
Eastern SDA						
Gunsgreenhill, Eyemouth	B	B	BB	AA	A	Strategic
Acredale, Eyemouth	B	B	BB	AA	B	District
Eyemouth Industrial Estate, Eyemouth	B	B	BB	AA	B	District
Hawk's Ness, Eyemouth (part of former Gunsgreen site)	B	B	AA	AA	A	Strategic
Berwick Road, Chirnside	B	C	CC	BB	B	District
Southfield Chirnside	B	C	CC	BB	B	District
Cheeklaw, Duns	C	B	CC	BB	B	District
Peelrig, Duns	C	B	CC	BB	B	District
Western SDA						
Cavalry Park, Peebles	A	B	AA	BB	A	Strategic
South Park, Peebles (safeguard)	A	B	BB	BB	B	District
South Park, Peebles (land use)	A	B	BB	BB	B	District
Traquair Road, Innerleithen	B	C	CC	BB	B	District
Traquair Road East, Innerleithen	B	C	CC	BB	B	District
Central SDA						
Pinnaclehill, Kelso – part on south side of Kelso bypass	B	C	AA	AA	A	Strategic
Pinnaclehill, Kelso – part on north side of Kelso	B	C	DD	AA	C	Local

bypass (Station Road / Spylaw Road)						
Wooden Linn, Kelso	B	C	BB	BB	B	Local
Tweed Horizons, Newtown St Boswells	A	C	AA	AA	A	Strategic
Charlesfield, St Boswells	B	A	BB	AA	A	Strategic
Extension to Charlesfield, St Boswells	B	A	BB	AA	A	Strategic
Tweedside Park, Tweedbank	B	C	AA	AA	A	Strategic
Tweedbank Industrial Estate, Tweedbank	B	C	BB	AA	B	District
Townhead, Earlston LPA	B	C	BB	BB	B	District
Galafoot, Galashiels LPA	A	C	CC	BB	B	District
Langhaugh, Galashiels LPA	A	C	BB	BB	B	District
Turfford Park, Earlston	B	C	CC	AA	B	District
Station Road, Earlston	B	C	DD	BB	B	District
Mill Road, Earlston	B	C	DD	BB	B	District
Easter Langlee Industrial Estate, Galashiels	A	C	BB	BB	B	District
Netherdale Industrial Estate, Galashiels	A	C	CC	AA	B	District
Huddersfield Street Mill, Galashiels	A	C	CC	AA	B	District
Wheatlands Road, Galashiels	A	C	CC	AA	B	District
North West Burnfoot, Hawick LPA	B	C	AA	AA	B	Strategic
Gala Law, Hawick	B	C	AA	AA	A	Strategic
Gala Law North, Hawick	B	C	AA	AA	B	Strategic
Burnfoot, Hawick	B	C	CC	AA	B	District
Weensland, Hawick	B	C	CC	AA	B	District
Mansfield Road, Hawick	B	C	CC	AA	B	District
Loch Park Road, Hawick	B	C	DD	AA	C	Local
Liddesdale Road, Hawick	B	C	CC	AA	B	District
Wildcat Gate, Jedburgh	B	C	BB	BB	B	District
Wildcat Wood and extension, Jedburgh	B	C	BB	BB	B	District
Hartrigge Park, Jedburgh	B	C	BB	BB	B	District
Edinburgh Road, Jedburgh	B	C	CC	AA	B	District
Bankend South Industrial Estate, Jedburgh	B	C	CC	AA	B	District
Bongate South, Jedburgh	B	C	CC	AA	B	District
Bongate North, Jedburgh	B	C	CC	AA	B	District

Dunsdale Haugh, Selkirk	C	B	CC	AA	B	District
Dunsdale Road, Selkirk	C	B	CC	BB	C	Local
Riverside 1, Selkirk	C	B	CC	BB	C	Local
Riverside 2, Selkirk	C	B	CC	BB	C	Local
Riverside 3, Selkirk	C	B	CC	AA	B	District
Riverside 4, Selkirk	C	B	CC	AA	B	District
Riverside 5, Selkirk	C	B	CC	AA	B	District
Riverside 6, Selkirk	C	B	CC	AA	B	District
Waverley Place, Newtown St Boswells	C	C	BB	AA	B	District
Landward						
Lennel Mount North, Coldstream	B	C	BB	BB	B	District
Hillview Estate, Coldstream	B	C	CC	BB	B	District
Coldstream Workshops, Coldstream	B	C	CC	BB	C	Local
Duns Road Ind Estate, Greenlaw	A	C	CC	AA	B	District
Extension to Duns Road Ind Estate, Greenlaw	A	C	CC	AA	B	District
Coldstream Road, Swinton	B	C	CC	BB	C	Local
Deanfoot Road, West Linton	A	C	BB	BB	B	District
Former Station Yard, Broughton	B	C	CC	CC	C	Local
North Lauder Industrial Estate, Lauder	B	B	BB	AA	B	District
Lauder Industrial Estate, Lauder	B	B	BB	AA	B	District
Croft Industrial Estate, Morebattle	C	B	DD	AA	C	Local
Croft Industrial Estate Extension, Morebattle	C	B	DD	AA	C	Local
Moss Road, Newcastleton	B	C	BB	CC	B	District

Digital Connectivity

The continuing evolution of modern business practices is changing traditional travel to work patterns. The economy and diversification of the way people live their lives will continue to be aided further by growth in the digital economy, making rural and home based business a practical and realistic proposition. This has opened up opportunities for new initiatives across various sectors of the economy. It is vital that technology within the Scottish

borders continues to advance including the use of higher broadband speed levels. The LDP should help in supporting the development of digital connectivity throughout the Scottish Borders.

Modern communication technology can help to disperse economic activity and reduce existing commuting levels. Whilst many such businesses can operate from home, others may require small, low cost sites.

Good quality broad band can help people to work more effectively at home. This can also reduce carbon emissions and negative impacts on the climate, by reducing travel to work. This existing pattern is likely to continue and expand in the future. The rise of online purchasing is likely to continue, which may lead to the requirement of larger storage and distribution facilities which can be dispersed over a wide geographical area.

Digital ducting is the physical infrastructure underground that can carry the fibre optic and other cables associated with digital technologies, including data services that can sit alongside traditional infrastructures such as telephone and electricity. Opportunities exist for developers to consider that the potential for installing the ducting to support services is factored into the infrastructure considerations for developments which can allow the support of emerging and future digital technology infrastructure.

The Scottish Government recently announced an initial £5 million contribution to the South of Scotland Next Generation Broadband Project. The funding allows the Project to move into the procurement phase which will begin immediately and is expected to last 12 – 14 months. This announcement follows a previous commitment of up to £21 million from Scottish Borders and Dumfries and Galloway Councils towards the Project.

The South of Scotland currently has 0% availability of Next Generation Broadband services, compared to 58% for the whole of the UK. The South of Scotland Next Generation Broadband Project aims to deliver 90% availability by the end of 2015 with a minimum connection of 2Mbps to the remaining 10%. The Project also aims to increase take up levels of broadband services across the region, currently 61% compared to the UK average of 68%. The total cost of the Project is estimated at £120 million.

The South of Scotland Next Generation Broadband Project is managed by the South of Scotland Alliance (SoSA). SoSA is a strategic partnership of Scottish Enterprise, Scottish Borders and Dumfries and Galloway Councils. The South of Scotland Next Generation Broadband Project has additional partners in NHS Borders, NHS Dumfries & Galloway and the Scottish Government. The Scottish Government has a target of Next Generation Broadband services for all by 2020, with significant progress by 2015. SoSA shares this ambition.

The Scottish Government is currently developing a National Broadband Plan for Scotland which draws together the ambitions of the Digital Strategy and the recommendations of the McClelland Review of Public Sector ICT Infrastructure. A fully developed plan containing funding proposals will be

published in Spring 2012, with the Scottish Government facilitating around £144 million towards next generation broadband delivery.

Although it is not clear as to the extent that the digital economy will have on the spatial environment, it is evident that the increasing use and quality of digital technology will affect many ways in which people live and work. The impact of digital technology is likely to have a major benefit to more remote parts of the Scottish Borders. Consequently the LDP should support the development of telecommunications and the digital economy, particularly in locations which are less accessible to major economic centres. The LDP should support and encourage the development of the physical infrastructure under and over ground for new build developments and for retrofitting existing communities in order to accommodate fibre optic, other cables and technologies associated with digital networks.