

Main Issues Report (MIR)

The Royal Burgh of Selkirk and District Community Council considered this Draft Document at its meetings in November and December 2018.

The following response relates particularly to issues which impinge directly upon the Selkirk Community Council area.

Main Issues Report (MIR) 2018	Royal Burgh of Selkirk and District Community Council agreed response
VISION, AIMS AND SPATIAL STRATEGY	
<p>QUESTION 1</p> <p><i>Do you agree with the main aims of the LDP2? Do you have any alternative or additional aims?</i></p>	<p>The CC acknowledges the adopted Strategic Plan in which Edinburgh provides the central focus for the overarching plan area. However, the CC has previously submitted its concerns regarding this document and regrets that the Scottish Borders (and parts of Fife) are seemingly disadvantaged as a result of this 'strategy'.</p> <p>With regard to this Consultation for the MIR, the Community Council notes and agrees that this report should endeavour to identify and meet the economic, environmental and changing demographic challenges which currently face the Scottish Borders. In this context therefore, the Community Council seeks reassurance that the policy outlined in the proposed document will endorse the need for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a future Selkirk By-pass to improve connectivity and that • inclusion of a potential rail extension south could provide both regional and national benefits. <p>These elements of a future central spatial strategy now need to be established as strategic policies with their alignments investigated and confirmed. This will then facilitate suitable planning policies to help achieve the longer term aims of the wider Development Plan and the next Local Development Plan (LDP2).</p> <p>It is suggested that other objectives contained in the future Plan should include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A way to resolve the continuing difficulties related to derelict/ brown field sites which lie in private ownership – it is suggested that Compulsory Purchase Powers should be used ideally via Government assistance in negotiated low interest or zero loans • A72 road corridor requires radical improvement to assist development growth and associated communication links • Pursuance of a 'Dark Sky' initiative for the Borders

<p>QUESTION 2</p> <p><i>Do you agree with the preferred option to retain the existing ‘Strategic High Amenity’ site categorisation and amalgamate the remaining categories? Do you agree with any of the alternative options including to retain the current policy position? Or do you have another alternative option?</i></p>	<p>Agree in principle although the CC has concerns about introducing a retail element into the options. Also, the potential involvement leisure/ hotel developments need careful consideration.</p>
<p>QUESTION 3</p> <p><i>Do you think there are any settlements in which new or more business and industrial land should be allocated, and if so where?</i></p>	<p>Selkirk CC suggests there is sufficient short-term capacity within its area, especially if derelict and brownfield sites are able to be ‘unlocked’ and properly developed. However, as already highlighted elsewhere, the approval of as defined line for a by-pass would provide additional (future) capacity with a unique opportunity for both residential and employment growth.</p> <p>Derelict and brownfield sites should provide redevelopment opportunities but there are clear dangers in privately owned land being left to visually decay and blight the local community. This stultifies growth and undermines the positive benefits of recent regeneration projects and investment into Selkirk (and other regeneration areas in the Borders)</p> <p>Current blighted sites include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • former St Mary’s Church site adjacent to A7 (suggest a design brief be prepared which retains the long outward view from the Market Place – as a community preference) • former Baptist church site (the Valley) • former Burgh School site - Chapel Street • former fish farm site (Philiphaugh Mill) - suggest a detailed brief be prepared • residual buildings/ sites (former Mill premises) in the Riverside area
<p>QUESTION 4</p> <p><i>Do you have any suggestions for a potential area of land to be allocated in the vicinity of Town Yetholm,</i></p>	<p>No comment</p>

<p><i>Lauder and Kelso for business use, and if so where?</i></p>	
<p>QUESTION 5</p> <p><i>Have you any suggestions as to how allocated business and industrial land can be delivered more effectively?</i></p>	<p>With regard to Selkirk, the establishment of an A7 by-Pass route to the south east of the town would define an area for future town expansion would allow both residential and employment opportunities.</p> <p>This would benefit both the town and central Borders and help provide a wider environmental choice for growth and improved communication/access</p>
<p>MIR document – settlement maps</p>	<p>It is disappointing that the settlement maps contained in the document are poor. They give virtually no context and no north point to assist orientation or proper understanding.</p>
<p>QUESTION 6</p> <p><i>Do you agree with the preferred options for the provision of additional business and industrial land/ mixed use land in the LDP? Do you agree with the alternative option for mixed use land? Or do you have other alternative options?</i></p>	<p>The CC suggests there is still a need to plan for future strategic needs and encourage a vision of future growth for Selkirk. For example, approval of a defined line for a by-pass would provide a new coherent town boundary to the east and allow appropriate zoning and development for the future.</p>
<p>PLANNING FOR HOUSING</p>	
<p>PREFERRED and ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS</p>	
<p>QUESTION 7</p> <p><i>Do you agree with the preferred options for additional housing sites? Do you agree with the alternative options? Do you have other alternative options?</i></p>	<p>With regard to Selkirk, new build housing take-up has been limited in recent years and this therefore argues against whether there is a justification for allocating further land for housing needs.</p> <p>However, there has been recent development emphasis on extensions and the development of small brownfield sites or plots inserted into larger garden ground via change of use powers.</p> <p>There is also a continuing need for affordable housing – provided it is provided in a central location and convenient to transport/ shops/ services.</p> <p>Avoid discriminating against the needy!</p>
<p>QUESTION 8</p>	

<p><i>Do you agree with the preferred option for addressing proposals for housing in the countryside? Do you agree with the alternative proposal? Have you any other options which you feel would be appropriate?</i></p>	<p>Selkirk CC recommends that the existing (grouping) policy is maintained and that one-off buildings i.e. isolated and apparent ad-hoc development set in the middle of our rural environment, which adversely affects the context and scale of the local (rural) environment - should be firmly rejected.</p>
<p>QUESTION 9</p> <p><i>Do you agree with the proposed existing housing allocations to be removed from the LDP? Are there any other sites you suggest should be de-allocated?</i></p>	<p>No comment</p>
<p>SETTLEMENT MAPS</p>	<p>It is disappointing that the settlement maps contained in the document are poor. They give virtually no context and no north point to assist orientation or proper understanding.</p>
<p>Other comments</p>	<p>Ref EILDON LOCALITY – ASELK040</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selkirk CC recognises the need for a robust master plan for this neglected area of the town - with formal discussion with SEPA to resolve their concern re flood risk – especially after the successful completion of the extensive flood protection scheme (which SEPA was party to). Any master planning to identify and include environmental and infrastructural protection. <p>Ref EILDON LOCALITY – AGALA029</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CC regrets the spread of urbanisation into this open environment which overlooks the River Tweed/ Abbotsford House and policies <p>Ref TEVIOT and LIDDESDALE LOCALITY – AHAWI027(Burnfoot)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> With regard to the proposal to add development to this approach into Hawick. This is a very open, highly visible/ overlooked area and the local environment needs to be protected and enhanced in this particular 'gateway' location. <p>However, this comment applies to all such proposals which introduce development at prominent sites or at the approaches to existing settlements.</p>
<p>Further specific comment re Selkirk</p>	<p>With regard to Selkirk: A7 By-pass to avoid town centre (whilst still providing access to the valleys)</p>

	<p>Selkirk CC still supports the need a by-pass – all the arguments have been well rehearsed and set out in writing – and to avoid damaging the benefits which have been gained through recent regeneration work. Already supported by the Selkirk community (via local survey poll) and seen as a priority by the A7 Action Group. Project also discussed at Holyrood with the tacit support of the (then) Transport Minister Humza Yousaf – noted that a by-pass is in keeping with the vision and aspirations of the National Transport Strategy/ National Planning Framework and current SESPlan which identifies the A7 route as part of the Midlothian East/ Borders regional corridor and includes in its objectives to improve connectivity and safety.</p> <p>Opportunity to zone specific residential and employment land to help meet future targets – land in this area would encourage/ promote better quality development.</p> <p>Green/ Open Space: SBC should ensure that Selkirk Hill is listed as part of Selkirk’s environmental assets –especially as its management is undertaken by a sub group of Selkirk Community Council</p> <p>Selkirk High School: A Master Plan and vision is required for the whole site, including an assessment of present buildings (and capacity), the Argus site, playing fields and the context of the Pringle Park which is Common Good land.</p> <p>This should also include consideration/ location of a replacement for Knowepark Primary School which could be incorporated in the o/a planning context. This vision could be defined on the east, by a defined by-pass line.</p>
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SUPPORTING OUR TOWN CENTRES

QUESTION 10

Do you agree with the preferred option? If so, which other uses do you think could be allowed within Core Activity Areas? Do you think existing core activity areas within town centres should be reduced in size, and if so where? Do you think existing Core Activity Areas should be removed altogether?

With regard to ‘prime frontage’, the CC notes and generally agrees with the recommendations of the local Chamber of Trade whose members strongly request that frontage protection be identified and extended viz:

- from Sainsbury’s at the north end of the High Street down to the West Port (as far as Rowlands) and
- extended up Kirk Wynd - just beyond Halliwell’s Close

all to support the fresh investment to the Market Place.

The CC also notes that parking management is a major concern in Selkirk (and other Border towns) and wishes

- to establish improved parking management to help facilitate a better flow of traffic and improved pedestrian safety in the centre of town

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> and, in parallel, to encourage the establishment of lower speed traffic (20mph zones) in specific traffic corridors through the town – to improve public safety and reduce emissions e.g. covering the section of the A7T from High School to Sheriff Court.
<p>QUESTION 11</p> <p><i>Can you suggest any site options within central Berwickshire, preferably Duns, to accommodate a new supermarket?</i></p>	No comment
<p>QUESTION 12</p> <p><i>Do you feel the requirement for Developer Contributions could be removed in some parts of town centre Core Activity Areas?</i></p>	<p>No.</p> <p>Potentially inadequate service infrastructure should benefit from Developer contributions and it is suggested that this be continued at least in the short term.</p>
DELIVERING SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE AGENDA	
<p>QUESTION 13</p> <p><i>Do you support the preferred option? Are there any other matters relating to sustainability and climate change adaption which should be addressed? Do you have an alternative option?</i></p>	<p>Renewable Energy:</p> <p>The Community Council notes that planning applications are likely to be submitted for taller wind turbines across the Scottish Borders (e.g. up to 200m in height) in order to increase their efficiency and is concerned that such structures which will have an accumulative and detrimental visual impact upon tourism and related leisure activities.</p> <p>Hydropower and solar arrays should be encouraged – in keeping with SBC’s recently adopted Supplementary Guidance on Renewable Energy which gives support to a wide range of types within appropriate locations.</p> <p>The option to use Common Good land where practical – eg for solar field arrays - has already been suggested and the adoption of such a more visionary approach to the guardianship of Common Good assets could significantly improve the financial return and o/a benefit for the Selkirk community (and others).</p>
<p>QUESTION 14</p> <p><i>Do you support the designation of a National Park within the Scottish Borders? If so, which general area do</i></p>	<p>Regrettably, the MIR lacks any balanced view as to the benefits or otherwise of such a designation. Selkirk CC notes that ultimately, this will be a Government decision but the consultation document merely asks for a ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ response without giving consultees an opportunity to gauge the pros and cons. Selkirk CC considers that the designation of a ‘select’ partial area could be potentially very</p>

<p><i>you think a National Park should cover?</i></p>	<p>divisive for those communities either within or outwith (and feeling excluded) – with consequent disparities in property prices and ‘benefits’ likely.</p> <p>The CC does not support the designation of a National Park within the Borders but suggests that it would perhaps better to promote the whole of the Borders area as a National Park where a concerted effort for environmental protection and tourism can be promoted – or not at all.</p>
<p>REGENERATION</p>	
<p>QUESTION 15</p> <p><i>Do you agree with the proposed redevelopment sites to be allocated within the LDP2? Are there other sites within the Scottish Borders you feel should be included?</i></p>	<p>Selkirk is not included in the list of preferred and alternative options but Selkirk CC wishes to draw attention to the following:</p> <p>Selkirk has been fortunate recently to be part of the CARS programme and is now beginning to reap the benefits of central area regeneration. However, it is also vital that the benefits of this investment are not lost or diminished by a lack of further commitment. It is therefore essential to identify future phases of work to remove remaining blight and create further opportunities for regeneration. In the current climate of stronger community support, in the longer term, this should generate even greater positive impacts on the economic performance and viability of the town.</p> <p>With regard to Selkirk opportunities, the CC wishes further consideration of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the impact of the A7T through the centre of the town and support for the establishment of a by-pass • public safety/ air and noise pollution/ structural damage/ disruption caused by heavy multi axle vehicles negotiating the A7T • lack of available parking and lack of parking management control (even with new ‘roaming’ police task force). • haphazard parking causing damage to footways and blocking pedestrian/ disabled access. • combining and making better use of the ground at the local police station (underused), the small adjacent public car park and also at the adjoining ‘vacant’ (United Reform) church
<p>SETTLEMENT MAPS</p>	
<p>QUESTION 16</p> <p><i>Do you support the principal of Oxnam becoming a recognised settlement within the LDP? Do you agree with the proposed settlement plan and its boundaries?</i></p>	<p>Is this a proposal fuelled by its geographic adjacency to Edinburgh or is the principle to be extended to all Borders communities of similar population size? Otherwise, no comment.</p>
<p>QUESTION 17</p>	

<p><i>Do you support the removal of the Core Frontage designation within the Newcastleton Conservation Area?</i></p>	<p>Only if this is in the longer term interest of Newcastleton and provided the local community (via the CC) supports the proposal.</p>
<p>PLANNING POLICY ISSUES</p>	
<p>QUESTION 18</p> <p><i>Do you agree with the suggested policy amendments identified in Appendix 3? Do you think there are any other policy amendments which should be referred to?</i></p>	<p>Selkirk CC has no objection or comment regarding the majority of the proposed policy amendments.</p> <p>However, with regard to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy ED1, the CC again draws attention to the unique development opportunities which will accrue when a Selkirk By-Pass is identified and in operation • Policy ED4 and ED5, the CC draws attention to earlier comments made in this consultation report and ask that these further regeneration opportunities are included as part of the planning options • Policy ED7, the CC endorses the need to consider the implications upon the wider and local economy for whatever BREXIT deal may be approved following current UK/EU negotiations • Policy ED8, the CC draws attention to the need for assessing the potential length of stay in caravans and chalets and to have a clear understanding/differentiation between short term holiday lets and longer almost permanent occupation which require different infrastructural and commercial support • Policy HD1, the CC stresses the need to include affordable and special needs housing in the programme. However, it is essential that these are located 'geographically' in locations where local infrastructure such as public transport and access to community facilities are easily accessible • Policy HD3, the CC notes a recent rise in planning applications which are not only 'infil' developments but also involve the insertion of new buildings into what was originally garden ground allocated to an existing dwelling. This trend can distort and harm the local environment and the setting of neighbouring residential properties • EP6, the CC reminds SBC that Selkirk Hill is an important Common Good asset and should be formally recognised as being an integral part of the Selkirk community • EP13, the CC asks that an updated map and list of protected trees (Preservation Orders) and landscape features for each community be compiled and made publicly available

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EP16, the CC requests the regular monitoring of air quality and pollution levels in Selkirk town centre - and in other towns where traffic levels are high • IS4, the CC draws attention to the need for a Selkirk By-Pass and the local and wider support which has been given to this proposal – in particular via the A7Action Group and local canvassing results <p>New Policies:</p> <p>Dark Skies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the potential for this initiative is endorsed and consideration of a wider (geographical) policy is encouraged – perhaps also including the area south of Selkirk, which is more central. • Regrettably, the Scottish Borders has no official ‘Dark Skies’ location. This is without reason – and a great opportunity therefore exists!
<p>QUESTION 19</p> <p><i>Are there any other main issues which you feel should be addressed within LDP2? Please confirm these and explain how these could be addressed.</i></p>	<p>Common Good Land:</p> <p>An opportunity appears to exist for an assessment to investigate the viability of certain areas of common good land to be used towards an investment which could provide a regular, more productive financial return for community benefit.</p> <p>For example,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • land could be set aside for the implementation of solar panel field arrays which could bring in a regular income to the immediate local community • (subject to public consultation) any parcels of land which are not being currently used in an optimum or economically viable manner, might be considered for development and provide a capital receipt which could help fund projects to help the local community. <p>WI-FI:</p> <p>There is general need and demand for substantial improvement to this internet service – to support and promote modern business</p> <p>A72:</p> <p>This linear transport corridor should continue to be improved to allow better east/west communication and access between settlements along the Tweed valley.</p> <p>Population Demography:</p> <p>The trends of outward migration of younger age groups and general increase of the elderly are worrying. Visionary and flexible physical planning is therefore required in order to encourage new technologies and businesses which can stimulate the community, attract new enterprise and maintain a stable/ vibrant population.</p>

Tweedbank Master Plan:

Selkirk CC notes that this exercise was rather insular in its approach and concept – perhaps the result of an inadequate brief? Insufficient consideration given to the wider strategic / infrastructural implications and context of the surrounding roads network eg Bottle Bridge / Melrose Road corridor and how the expanding community will integrate with ‘through’ and local traffic.

The CC regrets the decision to locate a relatively small hotel/retail development in this area which seems sadly misplaced, will weaken the existing Tweedbank centre and damage the local environment (with its geographic setting at the foot of the Eildons).

Railway:

Selkirk CC adds its support for the proposals to extend the Waverley line from Tweedbank southwards – and also encourages consideration of the potential for carrying freight (esp. out with conventional ‘daytime use’)

Community Empowerment Act 2015:

Selkirk CC supports the principle of involving communities in regional decision making but encourages SBC to fully appreciate (and articulate) the nuts and bolts of how this can be carried out whereby local communities can feel involved and empowered. SBC should encourage and make it easier for representatives of local groups (other than CC s) to take part in the decision-making process.