

**KELSO AND DISTRICT AMENITY SOCIETY**  
**Response to Scottish Borders Local Plan consultation**

Following members' submissions and the discussion of the Plan at a recent AGM (by Zoom) I can report:

1. **Overdevelopment and the effect on a unique townscape.** When the town centre was rebuilt in the late 1700s after the disastrous fire, the population was under 4,000. It is now 6,800 and the Plan is proposing to add another 700 *households* ie at least 1500 people. Recent redevelopments have been 'underwhelming and uninspired' and certainly do nothing to enhance Kelso's unique appeal. Can we be sure that the town has the capacity to support this considerable expansion – employment opportunities, enough school places, social care needs and medical facilities
2. The character of the Old Town must be retained and more people will put pressure on the amenities within the town centre. It was suggested that some of the streetscape features such as gas lamps and railings that have been lost over the years, could be replaced.
- 3 **The main concern** was the lack of any evidence that there will be action on improving the sewage system of Kelso. It is now more than a decade since it became evident that the present sewage facility is insufficient for the needs of the town. The solution – a temporary one it was said – was to tanker out the waste for disposal elsewhere. This is still going on and the number of tankers seems to be increasing. In the meantime, there is nothing said in the Proposed Plan, which outlines 700 extra houses, about a new sewage works for Kelso.

In part 1 of the Plan, where policies are outlined in general, Policy 159 on Waste Water etc. states quite clearly that the Council should be negotiating with Scottish Water and SEPA to provide proper sewage capacity. I quote:

**“Development will be refused if ..... b) it will overload existing infrastructure or it is impractical for the developer to provide for new infrastructure ..... “**

There is no evidence in the discussion of new developments in Kelso that there was any attempt to address this serious problem.

4. **The field** marked for future housing at SKELS005 on the Ednam Road covers part of the old (post glacial to medieval) Ferneyhill Bog. Although peat was extracted hundreds of years ago, the soil is still very clay rich and heavy. **Note:** the drainage will need to be very good indeed when they start to build otherwise the houses may suffer flooding/water retention problems from 'surface water run-off'
5. **The old Kelso High School Building.** The proposals we have seen so far for the housing development RKEL002 at the old Kelso High School building need to be looked at again. This is an important site around a significant listed building and it should not be overcrowded. It should also have adequate parking provided, to avoid the risk of more parking on Bowmont Street which can already be a problem
6. **Listed Buildings and the conservation area.** The policies as stated look good. Can we be sure they will be supported by regular inspections to pick up on any problems and enforce the policies

**Hon. Secretary:** Mrs Isabel A. Gordon [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

