

## Response ID ANON-VDDE-RPM3-5

Submitted to **Proposed Scottish Borders Local Development Plan**

Submitted on 2021-01-06 11:35:31

### About you

Are you responding as an: individual, group / organisation, agent?

Individual

### Individual

What is your name?

Individual name:

Heather Tibbetts

What is your email address?

Individual Email:

[REDACTED]

What is your address?

Address line 1:

[REDACTED]

Address line 2 :

Address line 3:

Town / city:

[REDACTED]

Postcode:

[REDACTED]

What is your contact telephone number?

Contact number:

### Proposed Local Development Plan Menu

Where would you like to go?

Submit your response to the consultation (Exit)

### Comment on Sites in Settlements F to H

Which Site are you commenting on?

Settlements F to H:

Galashiels: AGALA029: Netherbarns: Housing

What are your comments regarding this site?:

I am writing to express, in the strongest possible terms, my objections to the proposed development of the priceless Netherbarns site because the associated light, sound and visual intrusions will forever damage its unique heritage assets, historic setting and the cultural landscape of the Scottish Borders and Tweed Valley. Its development will reduce the enjoyment of visitors to Abbotsford and reduce the huge economic contribution which Abbotsford makes to the region.

I am basing my objection on the National Planning Framework 3 (NPF3):

"NPF3 recognises the contribution made by our cultural heritage to our economy, cultural identity and quality of life. Planning has an important role to play in maintaining and enhancing the distinctive and high-quality, irreplaceable historic places which enrich our lives, contribute to our sense of identity and are an important resource for our tourism and leisure industry."

My objection points out incorrect statements within the Local Development Plan 2 (LDP2) concerning the site and its relation to Abbotsford. It is proved with new data and statistics.

1) LDP2 is based on incorrect information

The LDP2 is based on incorrect advice in the supporting Full Site Assessment of the Netherbarns site (page 252). It states:

"These proposals confirm the site will not be visible from Abbotsford House during the summer months and in the winter months (when Abbotsford House is closed to the public) photomontages have shown that only fleeting views of very small parts of the site could be seen, but proposed housing (i.e. this would be a low density development of 45 units) would not be located within these visible locations"

This is incorrect for the following reasons:

a) It ignores the fragility of the mature tree screening on which the proposal is dependent, and which was made clear in the Abbotsford Trust's MIR objection of February 2019. This is based on professional advice received by the Trust with regard to management of the screening woodland in the Trust's ownership. It is highly likely that sight lines to the development will be created as mature trees fall naturally or are felled as part of active woodland management.

b) It is incorrect to state that Abbotsford is closed in winter, and misleading to suggest by this statement that visits to Abbotsford in the winter are negligible:

- Abbotsford is now open annually in December.
- The visitor centre has been open all year round since 2014.
- Restoration of Scott's paths in 2018 has led to increased visits to Abbotsford's estate all year round.
- A 'people counter' sited on the paths at Abbotsford (from summer 2020) recorded 13,000 visits in December 2020 alone, and 84,000 visits since it was introduced in mid-July 2020.
- 30% of November & December visits are from dusk when lights from Netherbarns would be particularly visible through the thin tree cover.

2) LDP2 does not properly assess Netherbarn's role in Abbotsford's contribution to the region

Abbotsford welcomed over 160,000 paying visitors from July 2014-19. There has been a sustained annual increase in visits of 82% (prior to Covid-19), contributing a total £7.4m to the local economy and supporting 148 jobs, as well as creating an additional 35 new jobs at Abbotsford.

In 2019, the Abbotsford Trust adopted a strategic plan which includes the following goal:

"Our place in the Community: we will be a catalyst for improving the life of our region by creating opportunities to positively affect direct and indirect employment, skills and employability, mental health, social isolation, learning and sense of identity."

This goal is dependent on a number of long-term targets which include safeguarding Scott's landscape, improving the visitor experience, and increasing visits year-round. None of the above has been referenced in either LDP2 or its supporting documents, and yet the Trust's objections have made clear that it considers the development of the Netherbarns site as detrimental to achieving these targets.

Surely it is the purpose of National Planning Framework 3 to enable such ambition and potential?

3) Development of Netherbarns would lead to an eyesore and a building site when the eyes of the world are on Abbotsford for Scott's 250th Anniversary and the Year of Scotland's Stories in 2021-22

The Scottish Government, the South of Scotland Enterprise Agency and VisitScotland have all supported the Abbotsford Trust in celebrating Scott's 250th Anniversary in 2021-22. Celebrations are being planned by an international partnership of 54 organisations led by the Abbotsford Trust, with Abbotsford at the centre of the visitor experience.

But as the eyes of the world fall on Abbotsford during the 250th anniversary celebrations and the Year of Scotland's Stories in 2022, how will the sights and sounds of diggers destroying the view be explained?

Sir Walter Scott believed that 'his oaks would outlive his laurels'. Will Scottish Borders Council dare to do the unthinkable and prove him wrong?

### **What would you like to do now?**

Proposed Local Development Plan Menu (includes Exit option)