

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 22 January 2021 18:55
To: localplan
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Local plan objection. AGALA029

CAUTION: External Email

PROPOSED LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2020; I write to give my objection

OBJECTION TO HOUSING ALLOCATION AGALA029

I would like this allocation to be removed from the local plan for the following reasons:

Effect on Abbotsford and its designed landscape

This site and a proposed housing development on it have now been rejected at four separate public enquiries, mainly due to the effect development would have on Abbotsford House and its designed landscape. It is disappointing that this is being proposed again and the proposal will have detrimental impact on the iconic nature and appearance.

Abbotsford House was the first example of the Scots Baronial architectural style and it is therefore important that not only the actual building but its wider setting is protected from any further development that could destroy that unique setting. There are also impacts on local wildlife such as the roe deer which travel back and fore across the river and can be seen grazing and rearing their young in this area at dawn and dusk. Loss of their natural habitat will impact on them and their well-being and safety and detracts from the natural significance.

The Borders Designed Landscapes Survey (Peter McGowan Associates) states that

“The gardens, policy woodlands and riverside park close to the house of very high quality and the whole landscape is iconic and of outstanding national significance.”

The views from within this iconic landscape and the nature within it, are just as important as the views of it from outside.

In 2007 the Local Plan Enquiry found that “the major tree belt along the river cannot be relied upon to provide an effective screen, either at present (in winter conditions and from higher elevations) or in the future (at all times and from lower as well as higher elevations)”. Since that enquiry the tree belt has continued to age and is damaged every year in winter storms. Therefore the site will have even more negative impact.

The 2015 Local Plan Enquiry concluded that they “did not accept that the woodland screening would adequately mitigate the adverse impacts of the allocation on the setting of the house or the designed landscape.”

Any structures built on the higher parts of the allocation site would be visible from the upper stories of Abbotsford and from the surrounding designed landscape over the tops of the remaining tree screen.

Designating this site for housing directly contradicts Proposed Local Development Plan volume 1 paragraph **4.6**.

This area being a through route and grazing for the local Roe Deer who I often see in the area in the evening and early morning, and this proposal would be harmful for them; they cross the river between Abbotsford and the fields impacted apron by this proposal. They roam and graze either side, increase in traffic combined with loss of safe traffic free space is essential to their safe survival. This area Also an area where barn owl and bats reside fly and and hunt in the trees and these creatures would be negatively impacted too by building there.

Increased traffic

This is a safety concern especially.

Netherbarns and Kingsknowes are outwith easy walking distance from shops, schools, employment sites and other services/ amenities. The bus is expensive, infrequent and inconvenient and the A7 is a difficult road to cross despite the traffic islands. Development at this site will lead to an increase in daily car journeys and an increase in the morning rush hour congestion. The kingsknowes drive cannot cope with additional road and traffic feeding into it and any tailbacks from junction could cause safety impacts within scheme.

This allocation contradicts volume 1 para **8.3** and policy **PMD1** in that it will directly lead to increased use of private cars. It is also contradictory to the Council's declaration of a climate emergency.

There are more appropriate brownfield sites within the easy walking distance of centre of Galashiels should there be a proven need for more new housing; also refurbishment and repurposing of current housing stock and other buildings, however see paragraph below re appendix 2

No evidence of Need for additional allocation

There is no evidence of any need for this allocation. Appendix 2 para **4.9** points out the lower level of completions since the 2008 recession due to lack of developer and mortgage finance. This financial problem will be worsened by the effects of Brexit and Covid 19.

Please acknowledge receipt of my objection.

Yours sincerely,

William Graeme Henry,

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