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**From:**

**Sent:** Sun, 24 Jan 2021 11:44:31

**To:**

**Cc:**

**Subject:** Eyemouth Local Development Plan 2 site REYEMOO2

**Sensitivity:** Normal

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CAUTION: External Email

Forward Planning Team,color:#333333">

Council Headquarters,color:#333333">

Newtown St. Boswells,color:#333333">

Scottish Borders.color:#333333">

TD6 0SA

F.A.O. [REDACTED]

**Local Development Plan LDP2 for Eyemouth**

Dear Sirs,color:#333333">

We are writing to express our objection to your proposed continued inclusion of site **REYEM002** being designated as “redevelopment” in the new Local Development Plan (LDP2) for Eyemouth.

We agree additional housing is needed for Eyemouth and understand this site has been allocated for housing development since the transfer of the Eyemouth High School to its current site at Gunsgreenhill in 2009. However, it is our opinion that this site is too valuable to the community as a green space to be used for housing, when there are other more suitable areas for housing development already identified on the LDP2.

You should be well aware that the Scottish Borders Council Plans to develop a new Eyemouth Community Campus on that site were met with great consternation and upset by many residents of all ages in late 2019. Most were not objecting to a new, much needed Primary School, but rather the potential loss of the only suitable site in Eyemouth to develop a public park that would be accessible to all. Our main objections are about the plans to build up to 90 houses on that site.

At no stage in this process of public consultation has Scottish Borders Council properly engaged with the local community. In fact the information meetings in late 2019 were so badly advertised that many of the immediate neighbours in Coldingham and Victoria Road(s) were not notified, despite sharing boundaries with the site! Some of these residents have still not received the most recent letter from SBC dated 2 November 2020, re SBC Local Development Plan: Proposed Plan, sent by Charles Johnston, Lead Officer, Forward Planning.

In response to the proposed plans relating to **REYEM002** in late 2019, a petition was raised and around a thousand signatures were collected from residents from all over Eyemouth, proposing this site be used, in part, for a decent sized public park. This is out of a population of approximately 3,500. Unfortunately, the petition was gathered just as the Covid 19 restrictions came into being. Had there been time, we are certain more signatures would have been collected. Without doubt, SBC’s communication with locals since Covid 19 restrictions have been in place have been even worse.

The former Eyemouth High School grounds have been used for generations for exercise and recreation and continues to be enjoyed by all age groups. It is in constant use, not only by members of the public, but also Eyemouth Primary School children, especially Early years children. The space is used to exercise, explore and learn about health, wellbeing and nature in a safe and secure setting.

Eyemouth is the only town in the Scottish Borders without a public park. Indeed, some smaller communities have much larger fully accessible greenspace eg Coldstream and Duns. An SBC Councillor has, in the past, instead of supporting the local constituents, has said Eyemouth does not need a public park as it has a beach. This lack of understanding both angers and saddens us. Every representative of SBC should know Eyemouth Beach is fully tidal and as such high tide occurs every 12 hours! There is also the perpetual problem of bitter winds coming off the sea. It is impossible to use the beach for any civic/sport event that may last more than a couple of hours.

The designated “green spaces” for Eyemouth on SBC’s current LDP2 show a total of 5.9 ha.

Only GSEYEMOO5 = 0.8 ha known locally as the ‘Four Road Ends’ park, is relatively safe and accessible for wheelchair users, children in prams, those with mobility problems and some sensory impairment. However, this area lies at Eyemouth’s busiest crossroads, has little or no landscaping, no nearby parking and no room for expansion.

The rest comprises-

GSEYEM001 = 0.9 ha at the current High School grounds. This area is on the outskirts of the town, is very small, has no nearby parking and if

only accessible via the school gates it will not suitable for the public.

GSEYEM002 Riverside =1.0 ha. This is a very narrow, overgrown area, with a mud path which is often boggy. It is not accessible for anyone with mobility or sight problems, wheelchair users or children in prams. Children cannot play there safely given how near the path is to the river.

GSEYEM003 Eyemouth Cemetery = 0.2ha. This is the old cemetery opposite the Home Arms Car Park, where the memorial to the 129 Eyemouth men who were lost in the Disaster of 1881 is situated. This land is not used as a public park as it is not only viewed by many to be consecrated ground, given the presence of many very old graves, it is only accessible by using steep steps. It is also fully exposed to bitter winds coming off the sea.

GSEYEM004 – Gunsgreen Planting 3.0ha. While it is the only large space in terms of area, it is not useable for anyone with sight or mobility problems, wheelchair users or children in prams. The size does not reflect the topography or shape. There is no open space for people to gather whether that be for civic or sport events.

In comparison, Duns with a population of around 2650 has accessible space totalling 8.2ha of which 4.5ha is a safe public park. Coldstream with a population of around 1850 has 5.5ha of assessable space (not including tennis courts) of which 3.1ha is a safe public park.

Green spaces have never been more valuable to society as during this current global pandemic where people require such areas to help improve their mental and physical health and wellbeing by facilitating leisure and recreational activities. As such these spaces are an essential part of the local landscape.

Eyemouth has a unique opportunity to invest in our town to provide a safe, easily accessible public park which will enhance the health and wellbeing of everyone. If planned properly, with locals and SBC working together and pulling resources eg the £200,000(approx.) ring fenced funding to help develop play equipment for Destination Parks, Eyemouth, like Coldstream and other towns in the Scottish Borders, could have a Destination Park. Such a park would attract locals and visitors alike and in turn would help the local economy.

If SBC build houses on this space, Counsellors would be going against the **Scottish Governments Planning Advice Note No 65 (2008)** which lays out the social, environmental and economical values of such Open Spaces. Any such development would also be in total contradiction to the **Scottish Borders Green Space Strategy** which highlights the health and wellbeing benefits of green spaces and opposes any such Development Plans.

Please reconsider the LDP2 and **consult and work properly** with locals to achieve what our town needs. Please also extent the consultation period for LDP2 and improve SBC's communication with the public to allow all residents to make their views known.

Yours faithfully

Christine and Sandy (Alexander) Mutch

