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From: [REDACTED]

Sent: Sat, 23 Jan 2021 20:13:39

To:

Subject: BYETH 001

Sensitivity: Normal

Attachments:
[REDACTED]

CAUTION: External Email

We enclose a letter of objection to the inclusion of this business and industrial area being included in the Local Plan for Yetholm.

Please acknowledge receipt of this email.

Margaret & Michael Rustad

Proposed Business & Industrial Allocation, Policy BYETH 001

Local Development Plan, Scottish Borders Council

Objection submitted by Michael & Margaret Rustad

[REDACTED]

January 23rd, 2021

Dear Sir/Madam

We wish to register our strong objection to the proposed Business & Industrial Allocation, Policy BYETH 001, contained in the Scottish Borders Local Development Plan.

We wish to make the following comments:

In general, one would expect Councils to encourage their respective districts to capitalise on their natural, physical and geographic advantages. In the case of Yetholm this would, apart from agriculture, be to encourage tourism, which as a major contributor to the local economy, has provided facilities for camping, caravanning, bed & breakfast, self-catering and hotel accommodation, as well as supporting the local shop (now bought out by the Community), Post Office, butcher, garage & filling station and public houses as well as other ancillary employment.

For walkers Yetholm could justifiably be called the capital of the Cheviot hills on their Scottish side, with both the end of the Pennine Way and St. Cuthbert's Way coming together. Such walkers patronise the above-mentioned facilities and discover what a beautiful place Yetholm is – nestling within the equally attractive Bowmont valley. Many have chosen to return either for holidays or to live here, finding the village and community very welcoming to incomers – even from across the Border, where the Northumberland National Park is a very close neighbour. Local & national authorities have also recognised Yetholm's unique beauty and long cultural history, which has caused the whole village to be designated a Conservation Area, with Listed buildings, of which our house is one.

To be seen in this context the Business/Industrial development proposed to be situated right at the entrance to Town Yetholm on the approach from Kelso would be totally out of character with the village and would immediately destroy the ambience and general visual appeal which has helped to justify its Conservation status. It would of course very seriously impact on the tourism which is the mainstay of so many in the village. The inevitable conclusion must be that, on balance, to graft an industrial site onto a clearly defined Conservation village boundary would, while being well-intentioned, do our local economy more harm than good, especially at a time when our hospitality and tourism businesses will be struggling to recover from the strains imposed by Covid-19. To provide artisan workshops is in itself laudable, especially when dispersed throughout the village, but it does beg the question, how thoroughly has this option been investigated?

Having only by chance been made aware of the proposed Business & Industrial Park for the local plan, we approached a landscape architect with a view to clarifying better options, but the shortness of time before the SBC deadline did not make an alternative study possible; were the deadline to be extended in order to give the opportunity for such a study, to be considered later at Government level when consideration is given as to whether the Local Plan for Yetholm is to be approved in its present form, [REDACTED] would be happy to fund such a study and make available their own expertise (going back over 50 years with experience in both major cities and rural areas).

The proposal to bolt onto a clearly defined conservation village an area of business and industry represents a clear reversal of previous planning for Yetholm. It would in planning terms be very difficult to prevent Yetholm being surrounded by similar bolt-on developments on all sides, destroying many of the features already alluded to, prized by Yetholm residents and visitors alike. This is not spurious conjecture; it has been witnessed elsewhere, a consequence of misguided planning policy.

For the reasons outlined above it would be highly undesirable if a business/industrial area were to be approved for a less than ideal location without the public being thoroughly engaged in the search for a better alternative. As long-term residents of Yetholm, active in many spheres of local life over many years, we have not been made aware of an acute need for such a provision. We therefore believe that, unless evidence is to the contrary, because the Local Plan has a relatively short time-call of only five years a considered decision should be postponed until then.

In your letter dated November 2nd, 2020 to us as residents with property adjoining the lower part of Deanfield, you notified us that this area continued to be allocated for housing. This situation has not changed in over forty years, and we are very positive towards this kind of development – indeed, one of our parents benefitted from living in the sheltered housing in Deanfield. However, it is apparent that when you sent out that letter on November 2nd, 2020, you were already in the process of proposing to allocate land for business and industry, also adjoining our garden, which you did not consider relevant information to include in that letter. This resulted in us being given misinformation by you: partial information which was misleading because it was incomplete. We are elderly, with one of us being disabled, and so we have not been monitoring local govt plans as closely as we might because of lockdown and shielding; we had trusted SBC to give us correct information already circulated in a letter.

Given that access to the proposed business/industrial area is thought to run through the lower part of Deanfield, this will undoubtedly change the nature of any residential housing, which would now inevitably be grouped around a through road carrying commercial traffic. It will also have a major effect on the use of the Back Lane, which is quite narrow, steep and has bends in several places. Senior members of SBC/BRC and its officers will perhaps remember the commotion and opposition which ensued some decades ago when it was suggested that a lorry park for [REDACTED] lorries be placed outwith the village on another part of [REDACTED], because it was thought, by BRC, that there was too much heavy traffic on the Back Lane; the [REDACTED] were parking at the top of the Back Lane and had already twice demolished a wall at the bottom of the lane outside [REDACTED]. The [REDACTED] are long gone, but the Back Lane is just as narrow and unimproved as it was then – possibly worse because of the lack of maintenance in recent times.

The part of our garden adjoining the land which you wish to allocate for business and industry has at various times been given planning permission for a residential property, the most recent proposal being to enable the Church of Scotland to build a manse, a project abandoned by the Church when their finances obliged them to re-think their plan. A stone wall over 3 metres high divides our garden from the land in question, but with the considerable rise of the terrain beyond our wall the garden is overlooked from quite a height, and screening for privacy would be an issue. (The uneven, undulating nature of this land makes it a surprising choice for such a development.)

We hope we have made constructive points, wishing the amenities of Yetholm to be promoted by our planning authority.

Michael & Margaret Rustad