

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Mon, 25 Jan 2021 15:57:23
To:
Subject: Local Development Plan: Scott Park
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CAUTION: External Email

To the SBC Forward Planning Team

Having read the updated Local Development Plan 2020, I have numerous concerns about the impact on our invaluable greenspace of Scott Park, particularly with the recent proposal of Option 3 which seems a complete u-turn on the previously established priorities for the area.

Scott Park is the only substantial dedicated public recreational greenspace within a half mile radius of Galashiels town centre, and is therefore a huge asset for the residents of this area, the wider town, and visitors.

Urban green spaces are essential to physical health, mental health, and general wellbeing. This is more apparent than ever with the current health, financial, and social crisis caused by COVID-19.

Even with the eyesore of the current Galashiels Academy building, Scott Park provides a large accessible open space with views of the surrounding Gala Policies woodland and the scenic hills beyond. Original proposals served to enhance these assets, replace the old school, and open up the park further. However, the new proposal (Option 3) does the opposite and results in all of these key benefits being removed or blocked.

A more imaginative and sympathetic use of the space available on the site could benefit everyone. It may be as simple as moving the building back (west) and bringing a grass sports pitch to the front (east). This would serve to open up the public park area even further and provide a new pitch for public use which is currently inaccessible at the rear. The new academy is a 1 hectare building going in a 7 hectare site, so it seems there is ample scope for consideration without encroaching on Scott Park or the wider Policies.

The Local Development Plan is a great opportunity to improve Scott Park, rather than erode or devalue it. The park should not be held to ransom by convenience, developers, finance, or a wider planning agenda. Galashiels has a history of questionable decisions eroding the history, aesthetics and heart of the town and I would urge you to reconsider your options before the floodgates are opened on another stage of irreversible development.

The wording in the original Local Development Plan appears to have been overlooked, so I ask that you please comply fully with the agreed priorities, and where possible even exceed them, rather than manipulate details to the detriment of a valuable greenspace and the wellbeing of the town, residents and visitors.

Thank you

Mathew Whittles

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