

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 24 January 2021 22:55
To: localplan
Subject: SBC Forward Planning: Re Scott Park

CAUTION: External Email

Dear Sirs

Having read the relevant parts of the proposed Local Development Plan 2020, and in conjunction with your recent adoption of Option 3, to build the new Galashiels Community Campus in Scott Park, I would ask that our key greenspace is properly protected

The wording in the Local Development Plan states 'The Council has also agreed to replace the existing high school and plans for this are progressing for a new secondary campus which is expected to be located on the site currently occupied by Galashiels Academy.'

Your Option 3 proposal, to build in Scott Park is contrary to this wording.

I would urge you to keep the new Academy building out of Scott Park and to please comply with the wording of the approved Local Development Plan 2020, and NOT to change the wording of the Local Development Plan to suit your preferred Option 3.

I note that from the local development plan dated 2016, that on page 7, fig.3 states that countryside access is a key part of Council activities to improve lives. It has long been acknowledged that access to green spaces are key to improving both mental and physical wellbeing in the local population and it is noted on the Joseph Rowntree Foundation document 'The Social Value of Public Spaces' (available at <https://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/default/files/jrf/migrated/files/2050-public-space-community.pdf>) that 'there is clear evidence of the importance of public space in successful regeneration policies and for creating sustainable communities'.

It is also to be noted that key to Scottish Government policy on Quality GreenSpace (available at <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/strategy-plan/2020/02/environment-strategy-scotland-vision-outcomes/documents/quality-greenspace-knowledge-account/quality-greenspace-knowledge-account/govscot%3Adocument/quality-greenspace-knowledge-account.pdf>) is the negative correlation between a reduction in proportion of green space and the reporting of stress.

While some council members see fit to only think of development and destruction of a valuable community space, one hates to think what effect the recent and ongoing lockdowns would have had without the safe and accessible spaces available at Scott Park and into the Gala Policies.

The 2016 Development Plan noted that the Council was 'looking at adopting an ecosystem approach to identify important sites for biodiversity' (Section 2.4) and that Policy EP11 was to 'give protection to a wide range of defined spaces.... To prevent their piecemeal loss to developments'. While I had heard rumours that SBC goes back on its word, I was not expecting to come across this so quickly, where ongoing current events prevent public meetings being held to stop views being aired and access to documents and plans limited to the proportion of the population who has access to the internet and the hidden away notices that show what our 'elected members' plan to do.

I also note that in the 'Review of Heritable Assets in Former Burgh of Galashiels' (from SBC website and dated 19th December 2014) that Scott Park is listed as a 'Community Asset' or a space whose main use has recently been or is presently used to further the social wellbeing of the local community and could do so in future. This would suggest that the space known as Scott Park, which was donated to the people of Galashiels by the Laird in 1939, is not a physical entity or body as represented by a council is not a negotiable or destructible asset, but one that is for the good of us all as residents and future residents.

I also note that comments from members of the Town council who suggest that 'we should just get on a build it' (as reported in the Border Telegraph, 19th January 2021) that these members fail to see the value of the space of Scott Park and degrade its use to a mere once a year holding pen for the Fancy Dress Parade as part of Braw Lads week.

I am the local Cub Scout Leader for Galashiels Scout Group, we use the space regularly for exercise, discovery, play, exploration, learning, litter picking, nature surveys and sports. We are not the only group to use the space and to negate our existence and right to a suitable space for play is a severe failing on the part of the town council and the borough council. As a parent, I use the space for my child to run in when our Public Park is full of screaming football fans or inaccessible due to the moneymaker that is the shows. As an adult I use Scott Park as an escape. It is quick to get to from my work and home and provides a breathing space that is so desperately needed for people who cannot drive or do not have the means to access some of the wider world beyond Galashiels.

Urban green spaces, those which are accessible from town centres are a source of much enjoyment and have well reported and measured positive effects on local population and their importance should not be held ransom for one section of the demographic over another, while also encroaching on the space, light and views of the nearby home residents.

I look forwards to hearing your response. We will not go gently into the good night

Signed,
Mrs Kathryn Peddie, BSc (Hons)



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