

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 24 January 2021 22:42
To: localplan
Subject: Local Development Plan proposal comment
Attachments: [REDACTED]

CAUTION: External Email

Dear Sir/Madam

Please find attached an objection to the non-inclusion of a site off High Cross Avenue/west of Ormiston Terrace Melrose.

Are you accepting proposals up to midnight tomorrow?

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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Scottish Borders Council
Local Development Plan Proposal representations 2021

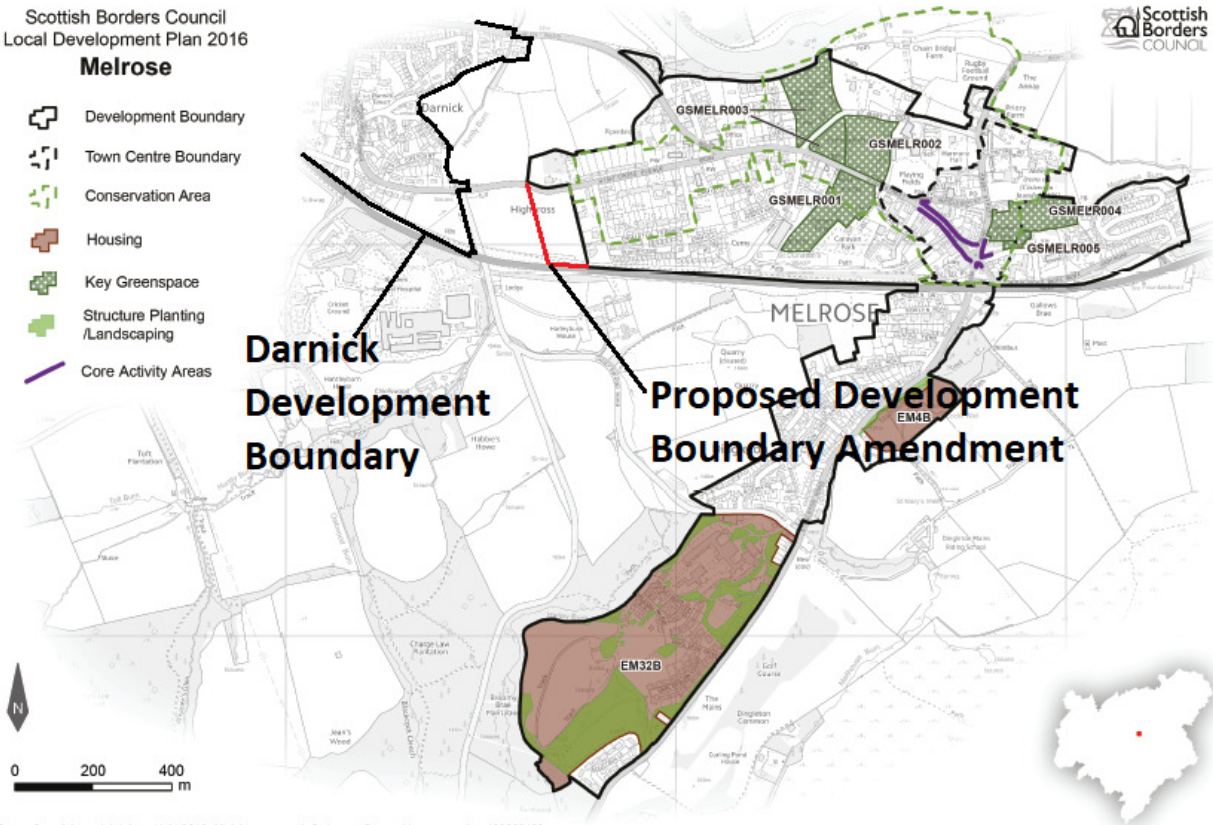


Existing development boundary in purple. Proposed extension outlined in red.

Prepared by:

[Redacted text]

The current owners of the [redacted] site, o [redacted] wish to object to the non-inclusion of their site within the proposed local development plan, which would be afforded by a development boundary amendment for Melrose.



Existing Melrose & Darnick Development Boundaries with proposed amendment outlined in red.

The proposed site is a 4.5 acre field located to the south and west of Melrose’s existing development boundary. Access to the field is taken from High Cross Avenue. The field is laid to grass with tree belts on the north and south boundary and a small yard and stabling area on the north west boundary. The site has been used to graze horses for 30 years +.

The site would be suited to development of 20-25 houses.

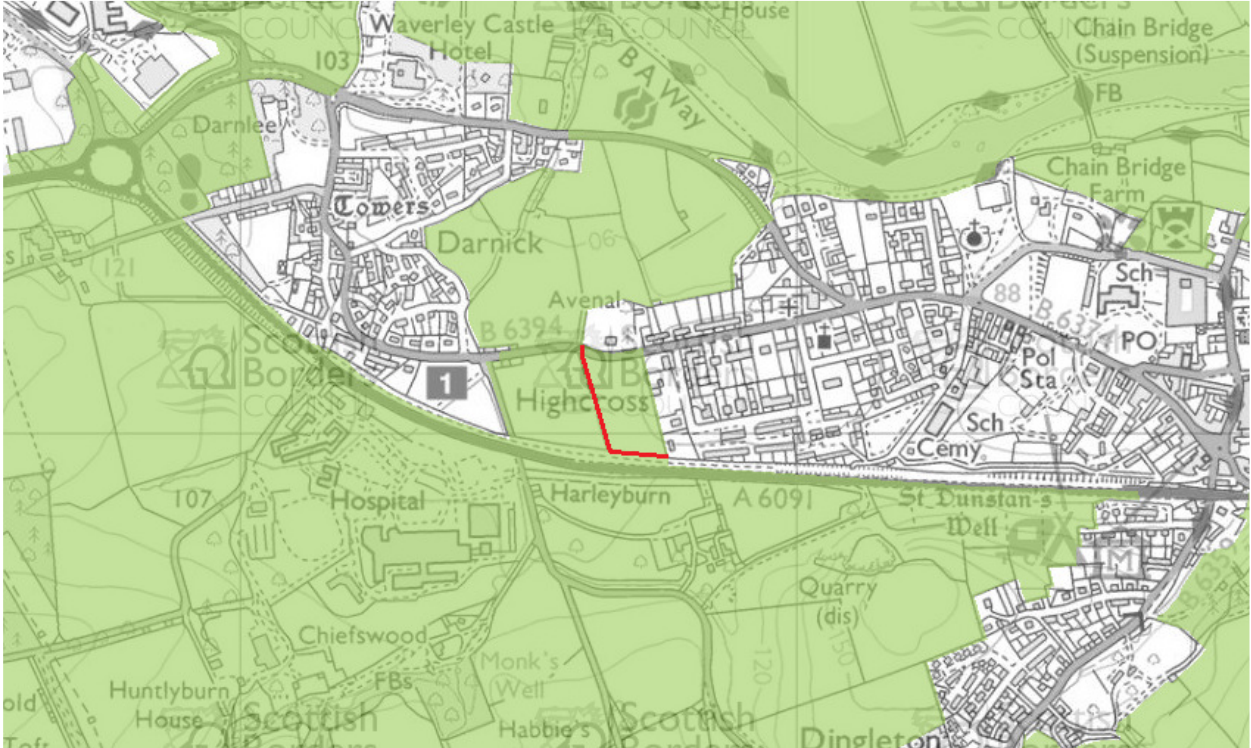
Following proposals at the MIR stage, the following site constraints were noted by SBC Planning Officers and their consultees –

Of the constraints noted we find the following-, the sites location within the Countryside Around Towns policy area is of most relevance.

- MOD safeguarded area. This is not relevant given the proposed development.
- Sites location adjacent to part of the Melrose Conservation Boundary. Not deemed to be a constraint.
- Potential archaeology. This is something mitigation can provide for, should the site be allocated/developed.
- Battlefield of Darnick. As above, further investigation and mitigation.
- Site located within the NSA. Not necessarily a constraint.
- Landscape Capacity Study. This conflicts with Scottish Government requirements and the Central Hub.
- Scottish Water Waste Water Treatment Works limited capacity. Scottish Water indicated to me there was capacity on our indicative outline application. The capacity is there, it depends on when a development occurs as to when the capacity is used. It appears to be a first past the post scenario.
- Requirement for non-vehicular access requirement from site to Core Path 10. This is not a constraint.

The sites location within the Countryside Around Towns policy area is the main current constraint to the proposed site being allocated within the Melrose Development Boundary, via the Local Plan.

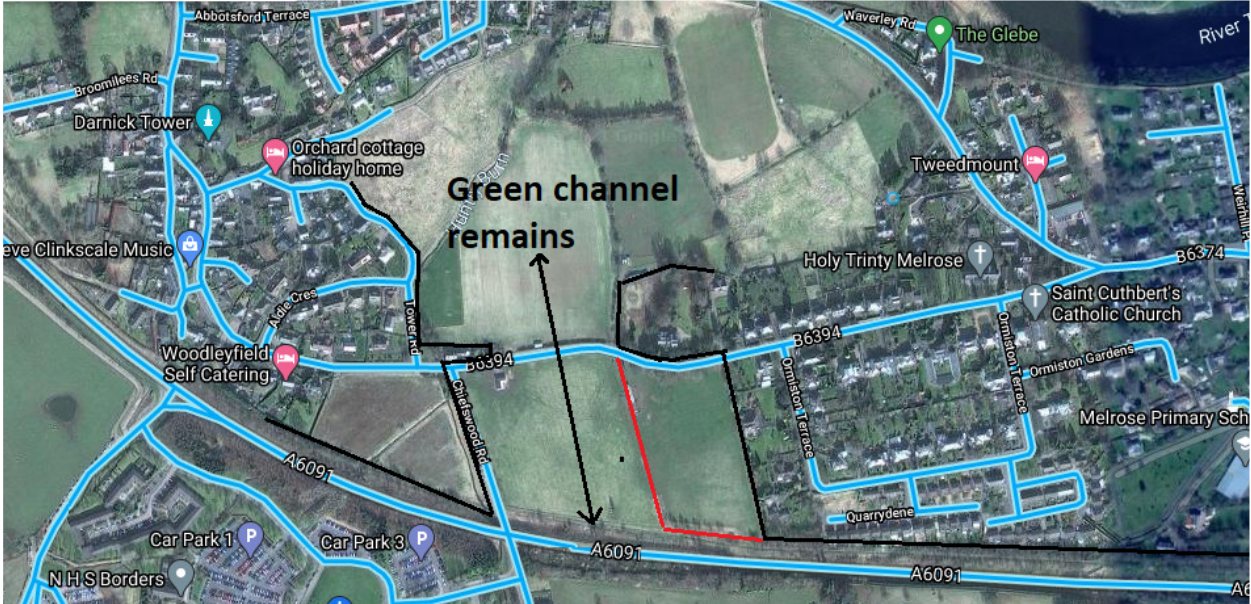
Countryside Around Towns



SBC Countryside around Towns plan from Policy EP6 with the proposed site area outlined in red.

The current local plan policy EP6, Countryside Around Towns, seeks to protect the coalescence of towns and villages, especially in the Central Scottish Borders hub. It is important to maintain a village and town identities. Ironically this is also where the previous ‘Call for Sites’ and by extension the new Local Plan aims to promote development, in order to create a larger population density to support the Central Hub including the rail link and infrastructure. There will always be conflicts with development proposals in these sensitive areas, and this proposal is exactly that. However, that does not mean that this site should be dismissed because it is located within the CAT area. If that were the case then any proposed development within the green shaded areas inside the Central Scottish Borders would cease, which I do not believe is what the National Planning Framework, Structure Plan, Local Plan or indeed Policy EP6 are aiming to achieve.

Realigning the development boundary to include this site, would bring more of Darnick and Melrose closer together, but, the development boundaries would be no closer than their nearest points already are and a significant green channel would remain as is demonstrated below. The realignment of the development boundary would provide a more linear final development boundary, to be put in place for Melrose on its south western boundary with Darnick.



Source Google Maps -Existing Development boundaries of Darnick & Melrose in black, proposed amendment in red.

The amendment of the development boundary here would not set a precedent. The sites promoted must be looked at on an individual basis. The fields to the west of the proposed site are not being promoted here. They are prone to surface water flooding and would not be suitable for further development on the basis that coalescence would follow, should they be proposed for development. Their existence retains a clear, easily read and defensible green channel between Darnick & Melrose, thereby retaining each settlements individual identity and avoiding coalescence.

Viewed from areas above and around the locality I do not believe that development on this land leads to the coalescence of Melrose and Darnick, whether that be perception by SNH, or actual.



Site viewed from top of Eildon Hills. Realigned development boundary shown in green meeting with the trees to the north which are in the Melrose development boundary. A clear channel of green space would remain between Darnick and Melrose so that they can be read as individual settlements from surrounding viewpoints.



Site viewed looking south. Realigned development boundary shown in green. Site not visible through trees which are within Melrose development boundary. Again, a clear green space channel separating Darnick & Melrose would remain.

The definition of coalescence is open to some degree of interpretation, though case law would suggest that the development of this site would not meet with the definition owing to the remaining fields and road providing adequate separation between Melrose and Darnick.

This proposed development site is-

- Deliverable within the short term because there is a market for the location.
- Serviceable and able to utilise existing transport networks.
- Provides a more linear and permanent development boundary.
- Within the Central Hub.
- Provides a more suitable expansion to Melrose than the alternative land proposed for adoption at Harmony Hall Gardens.
- Of a suitable scale in size.
- Of minimal impact to its surrounds.

Whilst coalescence is something to be avoided by towns and villages, so that individual identities can remain. I do not believe that the realignment of the Melrose Development Boundary proposed, creates coalescence. It is not relevant to suggest that if the site were allocated, the fields to the west would follow. That possibility is not being proposed here.