

Archived: 27 January 2021 17:25:01

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: Mon, 25 Jan 2021 11:44:50

To:

Subject: Scottish Borders Local Development Plan - Proposed Plan Response

Sensitivity: Normal

Attachments:

[REDACTED]

CAUTION: External Email

Dear Sir / Madam

Please find attached our response to the Proposed Plan Scottish Borders Local Development Plan Consultation. The response is submitted on behalf of our client, Buccleuch Property Group. The response comments on Housing Land Supply and a proposed allocation for housing in Melrose at Dingleton Mains.

Please find attached the following:

1. Written response to the Proposed Plan
2. Location Plan of site as submitted to the Main Issues Report
3. Revised Location Plan illustrating a reduction in developable area, as a response to the Scottish Borders Council Assessment of the Site.

I would be grateful if you can acknowledge receipt of this email and the attachments.

Kind regards

ALEXANDRA CAMPBELL
ASSOCIATE

Montagu Evans LLP, Exchange Tower, 19 Canning Street, Edinburgh, EH3 8EG

t: 0131 221 2474 [REDACTED]

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SCOTTISH BORDER LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN – PROPOSED PLAN REPRESENTATION

HOUSING LAND SUPPLY

We agree that the Local Development Plan 2 should incorporate a generous supply of housing land for a range of users. We note the Council's reference to the "limited take up of allocated housing sites" and we would propose that there are other sites which would be more effective for delivery within the Scottish Borders, including our client's site at Dingleton Mains, Melrose. This site is effective and can be delivered within the short term.

THE SITE

Melrose is located within the Central Borders Strategic Development Area (SDA) which is one of the four SDAs that SESplan states that development will be focused on within the Midlothian / Borders Sub Regional Area, and which is further articulated within the emerging SDP. Policy 5 Housing Land articulates that the Development Plan shall maintain a sufficient supply of housing land throughout the Plan period.

Our client owns land at [REDACTED] which is located to the [REDACTED]. We have previously submitted information, including Location Plan, at the Call for Sites stage and to the Main Issues Report. Our client's site is 3.2 hectares and is located adjacent to the site allocation of EM4B within the Scottish Borders Local Development Plan 2016. This site is referred to as The Croft and is allocated for 25 houses. We note that this site was originally allocated for 50 units in the Scottish Borders Local Plan. We also note that a planning application for this site was submitted in October 2018 for 28 housing units (ref: 18/01385/FUL). This application was recommended for approval at the Scottish Borders Planning and Buildings Standards Committee on 1 July 2019, and is currently subject to the conclusion of a legal agreement.

Our representation to the Main Issues Report considered that the Dingleton Mains site could form an appropriate extension of [REDACTED] site and offered the opportunity to meet the Council's original aspiration for 50 new homes in the area. However having reviewed the assessment comments below, our client is re considering the ability for the site to form an extension to The Croft site, and instead reducing the developable area of the site to accord with the assessment comments made in the Council's Full Site Assessment Document.

The site can be considered to be a logical extension to the settlement boundary of Melrose. It is well contained by roads and existing landscape. The topography of the site allows for development that would not significantly impact upon the surrounding landscape and would not be readily visible from Dingleton Road. Indeed our client's site is not dissimilar to The Croft site, in that respect.

We have reviewed the assessment of the site from the Council's Full Site Assessment Document. From this, it is noted that the Council considered there were a number of advantages and positives to the allocation of the site for residential development. We have noted below the main assessment points, along with highlighting the suggested challenges that the site may provide, if developed (in bold).

Access

The site has good access to local services and facilities in the settlement.

It has good access to employment, particularly in Galashiels.

Archaeology

There are no known issues, but some further assessment may be required.

Heritage and Design

There are no known issues and Historic Environment Scotland offered no comments on the potential allocation assessment.

Landscape

No comments were received from the landscape architect and Scottish Natural Heritage, (now Nature Scot – Scotland's Nature Agency) offered no comments. However, in the assessment it is noted that the site is within the CAT policy area which aims to ensure high quality living environment is protected and to prevent piecemeal development, which would detract from the area's environment. The assessment considers that the **scale** of development at this location would not adhere to the requirements of the CAT policy.

Transport

The transport officer concluded that that their preference would be for a **smaller standalone development** on the lower part of the site and a Transport Assessment would be required to highlight any improvements required to Dingleton Road as a result of additional traffic associated with the development of the site. No comments were provided from Transport Scotland.

Development Management Team

The site was considered to be well contained by existing development and woodland and well related to the development boundary. However, comments were made regarding the potential for the site to be **prominent from further afield due to the sloping nature of the ground**.

Infrastructure

There were no objections from Scottish Water or SEPA.

Contaminated Land Officer

No objections

Countryside Access Team

No objections but connection to paths to right of way BE192 and BE229 were required.

Education

No objections

NHS

No objections

CONCLUSIONS

Overall, it was considered that the development of the site was unacceptable for two reasons:

1. The site would have an adverse impact on the landscape of the National Scenic Area. The conclusion from this is drawn from the Reporter's findings into the 2006 Local Plan Inquiry and the Local Plan Amendment Process.

2. The site is located within the CAT policy area which aims to ensure high quality living environment is protected and to prevent piecemeal development, which would detract from the area's environment and that the scale of development would not apply with the requirements of this policy.

SUBMISSION

Our client has considered the comments made as part of the site assessment, and concluded that the developable site area can be reduced to meet with the comments made regarding the potential scale of development (landscape and development management team) and a smaller standalone development (transport).

A revised location plan is submitted which defines the proposed developable area, to address these comments. It is still considered that the site can make a positive contribution towards the housing land supply in the area. This would be provided in an area that has close proximity to Melrose and offers convenient and sustainable access to local services. The reduction in developable site area means that the concerns raised regarding impact on the National Scenic Area and the scale of development not according with the CAT policy area should be mitigated against, whilst also being to provide for a modest expansion of Melrose with clear defensible boundaries.

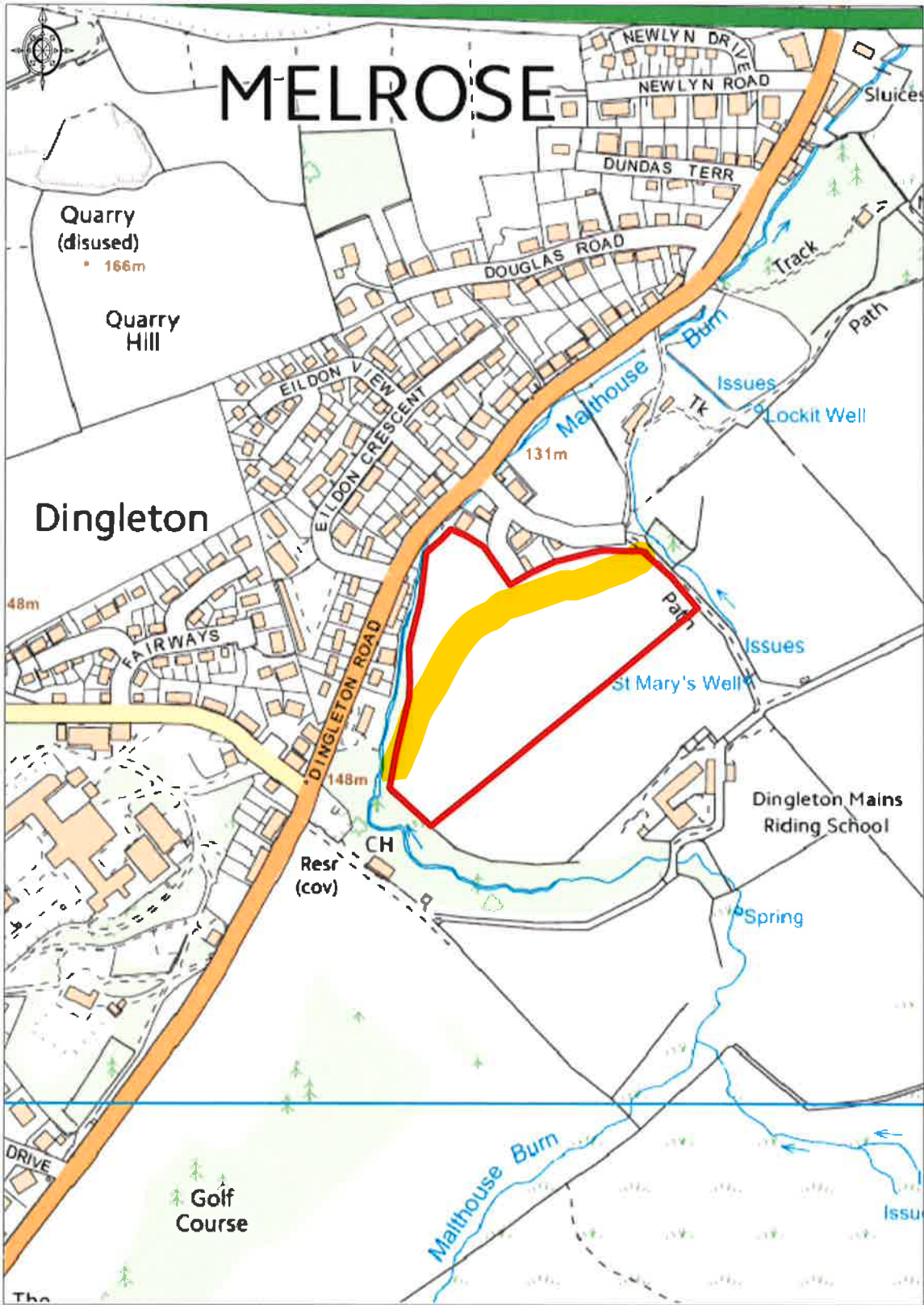
The revised developable area, as submitted, positively responds to the encouraging comments made within the Council's Full Site Assessment Document, with regards to how well the site was contained and how well it related to the development boundary, along with the excellent access to local services and facilities.

The site is in our client's ownership and is an effective site that can come forward in the short term. It is submitted that the amended site should be allocated for residential development within the forthcoming Scottish Borders Local Development Plan.



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