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From:

Sent: Mon, 25 Jan 2021 23:36:59

To:

Subject: Comments on Proposed Local Development Plan 2020

Sensitivity: Normal

Attachments:



CAUTION: External Email

Dear Scottish Borders Council

Please find attached comments on the Scottish Borders Council Proposed Local Development Plan 2020.

Regards, Ian O'Riordan



25 January 2021

Forward Planning
Council Headquarters
Scottish Borders Council
Newtown St Boswells
TD6 0SA

Via email: localplan@scotborders.gov.uk

Scottish Borders Council Proposed Local Development Plan 2020

Dear Scottish Borders Council

We are writing to object to Proposal BESH1001, the allocation of land at Eshiels as a business and industrial site, as we believe it is totally inappropriate. We are not sure how the decision to include this proposal in the plan was made but it seems particularly ill informed.

Eshiels is a small community that has grown organically over time. Originally a farm, the unusual settlement pattern dates from the end of the First World War when smallholdings were established. The 1911 Small Landholders (Scotland) Act enabled returning ex-servicemen to rent smallholdings. Those at Eshiels appeared to have been established in early 1920s. There were 14 smallholdings which stretched along the main road from Number 5 in the west to almost as far as the Glentress Hotel, and scattered up the road to Linburn Farm. Each smallholding was established with a cottage, either an existing dwelling or a newly built bungalow, a barn, and a field.

This unusual pattern is similar to those in other parts of Scotland. In south east Scotland, smallholdings exist at Damhead in Midlothian and Boggs Holdings in East Lothian. All of these settlements are a mixture of low density housing and small-scale agricultural enterprises, creating a croft-like pattern similar to that in the Highland and Islands. In this sense, Eshiels is an unusual settlement and the only one of its kind in this part of the Borders.

Since the creation of the holdings, other houses have been built in the area including a few bungalows in the 1970s and 80s, some larger houses up on the hillside, and the original farm steadings have been converted into housing. In Upper Eshiels, the area closest to our house, the settlement has grown by about 50% over the last 30 years. All the new building has been quite carefully integrated into the existing settlement pattern, retained within the original field boundaries.

The helicoptering in of a business and industrial site makes absolutely no sense in any kind of planning process. It would stick out like a sore thumb and be totally out of keeping with the existing surrounding landscape.

All the main Borders towns and villages are clearly defined urban settlements, with clearly visible beginnings and ends. This proposal would inevitably lead to creeping ribbon development and the further undesirable urbanisation of the spectacular scenery of the Tweed Valley.

The roads around Peebles and Eshiels are now much busier than they used to be. The footpath between Glentress and Peebles is poorly maintained and now very narrow in places. It is frightening to walk along. The 50 mph speed limit is neither observed nor policed. It is also a scary road to cycle along, given the volume of traffic and its speed. The potential development of business and industrial units at Eshiels would only further add to the volume of traffic. All of this is in conflict with the Council's aspirations to be more sustainable.

One of the major effects of zoning Eshiels for business and industrial development would be the detrimental impact on the attractiveness of the Tweed Valley as a tourist destination. Glentress has an international reputation as a centre of excellence for mountain biking. Surely efforts should be made to nurture and develop this instead of planning to convert the surrounding area into an industrial landscape.

The particular field earmarked for the development is prone to flooding and there has been a long history of flooding on the main road just next to it. At the present time (25 January 2021) the south east corner of the field is covered in frozen flood water. Furthermore the steepness of the upper corner of the field means that this is not an appropriate site.

Also there is no mains sewage in the area and this would have to be installed.

Where we live there are dark skies and no street lighting. Being able to walk out of one's front door on a cold crisp winter's night and observe the magnitude of the heavens is indeed a privilege. The creation of an industrial and business park with all of its light pollution two fields away would destroy this.

The legacy of hardwood planting of shelter belts in the field boundaries at Eshiels dates back to the 18th century and beyond and has created a distinctive and very attractive landscape worth preserving. This in turn nurtures a rich diverse natural habitat. If this proposal were to go ahead, it would be partially destroyed.

We would urge the Council to reconsider this proposal.

Yours sincerely

Sara Dunkley
Ian O'Riordan