

Bell, Laura (Planning HQ)

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 25 January 2021 22:02
To: localplan
Subject: Consultation on Proposed Local Plan
Attachments: NW 2021 Objection pdf.pdf; NW Fin. response to MIR pdf.pdf; Abbotsford Trustees submission 2019.pages.zip; Response 39.pdf; CAT Study.pdf

CAUTION: External Email

Dear Local Plan Team,

Please find attached my objection to the proposed development at Netherbarns, AGALA029, with four supporting documents also attached, and nine annotated photographs. Living some distance from the site and with current COVID restrictions, photography has been difficult. I would like to reserve the right to submit further photographs, which I believe would be useful, if and when conditions allow.

I would be very grateful iff you could confirm receipt, and that the attachments can be opened.

With thanks and kind regards,
Nicholas

Nicholas Watson



From Woodland walk SW of Abbotsford house.
Mid Jan 2021, c. 3.30pm



From Woodland walk SW of Abbotsford house.
Mid Jan 2021, c. 3.30pm



From Borders Abbeys Way, looking towards Gala Hill from behind Abbotsford House
Mid Jan 2021, c. 3.50pm



From Borders Abbeys Way, looking towards Gala Hill from behind Abbotsford House
Mid Jan 2021, c. 3.50pm



From Borders Abbeys Way, looking towards Gala Hill from behind Abbotsford House
Mid Jan 2021, c. 3.50pm



From Haugh below Abbotsford House. Mid Jan 2021, c. midday.
To illustrate permeability of existing tree screen.



From Haugh below Abbotsford House. Mid Jan 2021, c. midday.
To illustrate permeability of existing tree screen.



From Haugh below Abbotsford House. Mid Jan 2021, c. midday.
To illustrate permeability of existing tree screen.



Looking over the Netherbarns site itself, south-westwards over the wooded Abbotsford Designed Landscape.

Mid Jan 2021, c. 4.20pm

Proposed Local Plan Consultation Response

January 2019

Netherbarns AGALA029

Dear Sirs,

This objection should be read in conjunction with my earlier objection (313) of January 2019, which I feel stands in its entirety, and which I ask, please, should also be forwarded to the Reporters' office for their attention. Among the many previous other objections, I would particularly like to draw attention to that from the Abbotsford Trustees, (310 in response to the MIR) and from Dr Malcolm Morrison, (39), and trust that these too will be forwarded to the Reporters' office in due course.

"There are many important listed buildings both within and out with the settlements, including Abbotsford House and Chiefswood. The surrounding grounds to these two houses are also recorded in the Inventory of Gardens & Designed Landscapes. This highly sensitive landscape is an integral factor in the need to ensure that any settlement expansion does not eclipse the historical importance and recreational qualities of the area."

This is from the Countryside Around Towns Policy (Section 7.2), one of the many planning policies designed to protect our heritage from damaging development. Abbotsford and its surrounding landscape are among Scotland's most important heritage assets. Landscape was key to Scott's thinking and his creation at Abbotsford, and is key to the appreciation of Abbotsford today: it's landscape setting is vital in terms both of heritage and of visitor experience. Such is the importance of Abbotsford, not only in heritage terms, but also as a tourism and economic asset to the Borders, that protecting and enhancing its setting for the long term should be regarded as of strategic importance. There are therefore compelling reasons to resist inappropriate intrusion into the landscape setting of Abbotsford and it was surprising to find Netherbarns included as an (alternative) housing site in the MIR, and amazing that, despite the concerns of Abbotsford Trustees, SNH, HES and many others, it is now in the Proposed LDP.

"New" Proposals

In the papers before Scottish Borders Council in September 2019, Officers explained why they thought it reasonable to put forward Netherbarns yet again. The latest plans, they submitted, were substantially different to what had been proposed before. This suggestion is very misleading.

The proposals for Netherbarns in 2013 /14 (proposals which were rejected by Scottish Ministers) included a requirement for a masterplan to be developed. **There is no**

element of the current proposals that could not have been achieved through such a masterplanning process. Notwithstanding some improvements in the currently proposed designs, it makes no sense to suggest that the present proposals are any better than what might have been achieved through the formally required exercise of a masterplan.

Furthermore, the Reporter's dismissal of the previous Netherbarns proposals was underlined by his rejection, at the same time, of a far more modest scheme of a handful of houses along with significant tree-planting. It is hard to see that planners have taken proper account of previous Reporters' findings.

Acceptable Alternative

While I was naturally glad that proposals for forty-five houses at Netherbarns were rejected by the Reporter in 2014, the simultaneous rejection of the much more modest scheme was disappointing, for two reasons: partly because I believed such a scheme could have been acceptable and even beneficial, also because I feared that if no development at Netherbarns was agreed then further suburban development proposals would simply be presented again at the next LDP round; and that is exactly where we find ourselves now. I therefore urge Reporters to re-consider proposals for very modest development, along with substantial areas of tree-planting, in order to provide an acceptable solution once and for all. This is not a new approach; it was put forward at the first Netherbarns public inquiry in 2004, and has since been advocated as an acceptable alternative by many who have objected to the Council's suburban proposals.

Rural-Character development at Netherbarns

First proposed (by Save Scott's Countryside) at public inquiry in 2004.

In contrast to current development proposals for Netherbarns, a modest number of houses with the odd paddock / orchard etc, within significant areas of tree-planting would have the potential to

- bring closure to the inappropriate expansion of Galashiels westwards up the Tweed Valley*
- mitigate nearby developments*
- restore in part the loss of fine trees on this edge of Galashiels*
- improve the setting of nearby listed buildings Netherby and Brunswickhill*
- break, in time, the hard lower edge of the Netherbank development which is visible even from Scott's View and from the Eildon Hills*
- considerably lessen the impact of decay in the important tree screen on the north bank of the Tweed opposite Abbotsford*
- provide local amenity*
- **secure and enhance the long-term setting of Abbotsford.***

I note from MIR responses that if such a scheme were included in the LDP then Save Scott's Countryside would be willing to help fund and organise an open competition for the best masterplan. I am not generally a fan of competitions, but in this case it could work well, with the focus on protecting and enhancing the setting of Abbotsford at the same time as enabling some development on the site.

Character of Development

Perhaps the most frequent objection to development proposed at Netherbarns is to its suburban nature.

There is nothing wrong with suburban development per se.

The objection is to suburban development in the wrong place - at Netherbarns.

Many, including Historic Scotland and previous Reporters, have noted that the development of Netherbank and Kingsknowes (above and beside the Netherbarns site) is "regrettable", and have advised that these developments should not be seen as setting an acceptable precedent. I agree, and my concern is that Netherbarns, which currently acts as something of a foil to the overflow of Galashiels, will simply become part of the town's southwest expansion over the Kingsknowes shoulder, further into the Tweed valley, and further into the setting of Abbotsford. It is not simply the suburban layout and sight of the proposed houses which would be undesirable; the attendant light, (from houses, streetlights and security lighting), the traffic, parked vehicles, all the things that end up in our gardens, and noise, these things would all be much more noticeable than the existing field, unavoidably adding to the suburban effect. To quote from Reporter Richard Hickman's 2007 findings, "*... this is a particularly sensitive landscape, where even a very minor intrusion of alien elements is likely to mar the perceived experience of visitors, many of whom will have travelled a great distance to visit Abbotsford, with correspondingly high expectations.*"

The proposed suburban development would be completely at odds with the largely wooded landscape which is such an important part of Abbotsford's setting.

If, on the other hand, the development of say ten houses were allowed, with significant areas of tree-planting, then the impact of Netherbank and of Kingsknowes would be gradually softened, and Netherbarns itself could be read as a rural site on the outer edge of Galashiels, with (listed) Netherbarns farm-house and steading as a final "punctuation mark" to the south-west.

The difference between the present suburban proposals, and the very modest level of rural development described above - secured as such by significant tree-planting, is crucial to the acceptable development of the site. A few houses and some really worthwhile areas of new planting could give the overall impression, not of a partially screened suburban development, but of a handful of houses in a wooded landscape. The point at this stage is not to focus on exact details, rather to establish that any development at Netherbarns should be modest, rural in character and with significant areas of tree-planting.

Officers' Assessment

In cases such as Netherbarns where there are strong but opposing views, (the developer on one side, everyone else on the other!), the Officers' report can be of great value to Councillors, many of whom will not have had time to make their own assessments. (This is particularly the case when multiple sites across the Borders are being considered for inclusion in the Proposed LDP). Having served on the planning committee for some six years, latterly as vice-chairman, I know how useful Officers' reports are, especially when the underlying tone can be read.

I know how irritating a mass of objections can be which simply describe a proposal as damaging but without giving clear reasons why. However, the MIR consultation drew a wide range of detailed and well-reasoned objections to Netherbarns, and I was disappointed to feel that underlying the Officers' assessment of these responses is what might be described as an "ungenerous" tone.

Below are three examples, all of them about substantive planning matters deserving fresh and proper consideration because of changes that have taken place since the preparation of the last LDP. I was sorry to see the concerns raised so cursorily dismissed in the Officers' assessment.

1. New Views towards Netherbarns

Since the preparation of the last LDP, considerable works have been undertaken to restore Abbotsford's woodlands and the paths through them. This includes Scott's woods along the lower valley side to the south-west of the house, the part of the Designed Landscape most frequently enjoyed by visitors to Abbotsford. Fresh views across "*my beloved Tweed*" (Scott) have been opened up, including views towards the Netherbarns site. This work is important, not only because the extensive path network is now enjoyed year round by more people than ever, but also from a heritage point of view because Scott's pioneering role as a Romantic landscape designer is revealed. Major works have recently been carried out on the North Terrace too, which also looks across to Netherbarns. All this was described in responses to the MIR, requesting that account be taken of these re-opened views.

Here is the Officers' assessment: *Throughout the Scottish Borders there are numerous woodland management schemes/woodland walks but none of this work should in any way be considered to prevent opportunities for development in the vicinity.*

This is despite advice from HES: *The Abbotsford Trust have recently commissioned a landscape management plan for the Abbotsford estate. The plan's proposals may involve reopening of historic views from house and estate, which may take in this site.*

The Officers' assessment also advises: *The Council is unaware there is any evidence at all that any existing houses which can be viewed from the House have had any adverse impacts at all to visitors to the House.*

This is disingenuous, and I can only answer in the simplest possible terms: “(i) *When I look out from the house at Abbotsford, or from the great north terrace, or from various places in the Designed Landscape, or indeed when I look towards Abbotsford, from the Southern Upland Way for example, does the existing nearby development, especially at Netherbank and Kingsknowes, somewhat spoil the setting of Abbotsford and my appreciation of it?*” Answer, “Well, yes, I am sorry but it does. (ii) *And would the proposed spread of suburban development onto Netherbarns make this worse?*” Answer, “Yes, I believe it certainly would.” This may not be a very sophisticated assessment, but it is the key planning judgement required here. Luckily it is a judgement which people can make without any planning training, and I have no doubt that the great majority of people would make the same judgement as Reporters have in the past. If objectors say they believe a view would be spoiled, and that landscape and views are an important part of visiting Abbotsford, then that is simply what they mean.

Officers do not appear to have responded at all to the suggestions (several of them) for very modest development at Netherbarns along with significant tree-planting. It would have been useful to Councillors if they had. To re-run question (ii) above: “*And would significant tree-planting on the Netherbarns site, with a small number of houses among the trees, soften the effect of nearby development, and would this improve views from Abbotsford and its surroundings?*” Answer, “Yes, and Yes!”

2. Hardwood Tree Screen

Many responses to the MIR highlighted the inadequacy of the existing tree screen on the north bank of the Tweed which has further deteriorated even since the preparation of the last LDP. Besides being the most valuable screening element, these mature trees are an important part of the Designed Landscape, being directly in Abbotsford House's key vista. The Abbotsford Trustees have engaged professionals to identify the best approaches to strengthening this tree screen. Both options would involve a temporary but significant reduction in effective screening, lasting for decades. To their credit, in their own submissions the developers recognise not only the importance of this screen but also its deteriorating condition. All this was set out in detail in MIR responses.

Here is the Officers' assessment: *Officers are aware that Abbotsford House wish to undertake some maintenance work on trees on the north side of the River Tweed located between the site and Abbotsford House. These trees are prominent and are protected by a Tree Preservation Order. Any works to these mature trees would require the consent of the Council. This has not been applied for and would have*

to be considered very carefully by the Council. Whilst some maintenance work could be agreed, the removal of these mature and prominent trees would be a major issue.

Instead of offering this bizarre advice, it would have been helpful if Officers had summarized the state of the tree screen, what might happen to it in the longer term, and explained that the developers' proposed additional screening could not become effective until years after building has been started.

I ought to add that in some lights the existing tree screen is pretty effective, even in winter. But in other conditions the existing development at Netherbank is very noticeable. It seems that when it is sunny in the afternoons - precisely the conditions likely to attract people to Abbotsford - then the light comes from behind the tree screen, meaning that the existing field, and so anything built upon it, is much more visible. I am no photographer, but I am submitting a few pictures which I hope will be helpful. Unfortunately bright afternoon sunshine does not feature.

3. Winter

Much is made in the Officers' assessment of the fact that views of development at Netherbarns would be seasonal and that Abbotsford is not open in the winter. Apart from the flawed idea that heritage assets do not need to be protected when they are not being visited, to suggest that Abbotsford does not have winter visitors is simply wrong. Winter visiting has in fact risen significantly, with plans to boost this in future. This was clearly set out in MIR responses, but these responses too appear to have been overlooked by Officers, despite early advice from SBC's own Landscape team: *Before allocating the site we should require further visual assessment carried out in the winter months to test the conclusions of the recent appraisal.*

Below is a useful update on winter visiting. (By email from Abbotsford's Chief Executive, September 23, 2020)

Hi Nicholas

We have adopted a strategic plan which includes developing more visits over the winter. We've usually closed House admissions in Dec, Jan & Feb, although the Visitor Centre & Estate remains open all year.

This year we'll open the House all Dec and probably weekends in Jan & Feb. We're keen to develop December year-on-year in particular, with Xmas activities, visits and events. Including estate ranger walks and activities.

Community use of our estate continues all year, and during Covid has increased substantially. In the last 4 weeks we've had 7,517 estate visits. We know that due to a new automated counter.

Developing winter visits is not only critical to Abbotsford's continued financial viability, but we're also one of the only attractions open over the winter. Local tourism businesses regularly tell us they rely on us opening to sell overnight stays.

Best, Giles

Statutory Body Responses

Careful reading of the HES submission makes it clear that they are very cautious, and would much rather the Netherbarns site were not included in the LDP at all. HES also asked that SBC's own judgement that development at Netherbarns would have the potential for "*minor negative effects on cultural heritage*", should be revised to "*significant negative effects on the historic environment.*"

I note that the SBC Strategic Environmental Assessment states that HES is "*Content with the principle of development for 45 units here*". This is misleading. HES stated that they accept "*the principle of development for up to 45 units*" (my underlining), and go on to state that various factors would need to be considered through the masterplanning process, including the "*number and type of housing units*". This is an important difference.

SNH's response is perhaps yet more negative than that of HES:

"Our previous advice on this site was that it "lies outwith the current settlement boundary as shown in the LDP. We understand that the site was included as an allocation in the Proposed Plan but, in their report of examination, the Reporter recommended its deletion. This recommendation was based partly on landscape impacts. We are not aware of a potential solution that should change that decision." We do not consider that this situation has changed and we consider that this site should not be allocated due to the previously identified landscape impacts."

This can be found on SBC's website at <https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/downloads/file/6307/r213> Note that all reference to SNH has been redacted. In effect it reads as an objection. Like almost every other respondent, SNH regards the impacts of suburban development at Netherbarns as unacceptable and without remedy. I do not know at what point Councillors may have been informed of SNH's opposition.

Officers have made frequent reference to the fact that HES has not raised an objection. It would have been much better if they had tried to convey HES's serious reservations. Meanwhile, SNH's objection has scarce seen the light of day.

Experience of Scott's Landscape

I ask that the wide-ranging submission made in 2019 by the Abbotsford Trustees, in response to the MIR consultation, should be made available to Reporters. It examines the experience of landscape at Abbotsford. Landscape was central to Scott's creative work. Remember that from the earliest days Scott welcomed visitors to Abbotsford, and wanted them to appreciate the landscape he had created. How he would approve of the Abbotsford Trustees' present efforts to enable visitors and others to draw enjoyment, learning and wellbeing from his landscape.

One aspect of Abbotsford's work which I was not aware of until I read the MIR representations is the "Learning in a Heritage Landscape" project. The section on this in Abbotsford's January 2019 submission is noteworthy, also the submission of contributor **39**. Just as Scott himself believed that interacting with landscape can enrich the mind, the Trustees are now working to help disadvantaged young people to find purpose and hope for the future. This is an exemplary project, and underlines the importance of protecting Scott's landscape from un-neighbourly intrusion.

Policy Areas

Previously the Netherbarns site fell within the Eildon Hills and Bowhill Area of Great Landscape Value. (Finalised Local Plan of 2005) Although not intrinsically an outstandingly attractive piece of land, the value of the Netherbarns site as undeveloped farmland situated in the principal vista of Abbotsford House, its relation to the Abbotsford Designed Landscape, and indeed to the Eildon and Leaderfoot National Scenic Area, is clearly significant. (I remember at the first Netherbarns public inquiry how Scottish Borders Council claimed, to no avail, that Netherbarns was not in fact in the Eildon Hills and Bowhill Area of Great Landscape Value.)

The site is included, however, in the Countryside Around Towns Policy, originally supplementary guidance, now incorporated into the LDP, (EP6) with priority level A status. Not only does this policy clearly identify Abbotsford and the Designed Landscape as worthy of especial protection (section 7.2, quoted at the start of this submission), it also specifically identifies the Netherbarns site. Underlying the policy is a detailed study of the area around Galashiels through to Newtown St Boswells. (See: 28119_Countryside_Around_Towns_Appendix_2 (1).pdf Central Borders Coalescence Study – Technical Note)

Areas of Great Landscape Value were subsequently superseded by **Special Landscape Areas** (Policy EP5 in the present LDP). The Netherbarns site does not fall within this designation.

The site is included, however, in the **Countryside Around Towns Policy**, originally supplementary guidance, now incorporated into the LDP, (EP6) with priority level A status. Not only does this policy clearly identify Abbotsford and the Designed

Landscape as worthy of especial protection (section 7.2, quoted at the start of this submission), it also specifically identifies the Netherbarns site.

Underlying the policy is a detailed study of the area around Galashiels through to Newtown St Boswells. The Netherbarns site forms part of square number 30 in this study. Each square was ranked Low, Medium or High in relation to Landscape, Biodiversity, Accessibility and Historical. Square 30 scored a High in each category. (See: *28119_Countryside_Around_Towns_Appendix_2 (1).pdf Central Borders Coalescence Study – Technical Note*)

To be fair, the majority of squares included in the final designation area also have an overall High score. But the Netherbarns site is particular in one respect: it is the only part of the final designated area which did not fall within the original study area, (see page 8 of the Technical Note). In other words, at some point **a specific decision was made to include this particular site within the policy area.**

Of course it is within the gift of the Council to (attempt to) change planning policy itself, or its extent, but nothing about the underlying importance and sensitivity of Netherbarns and its relation to Abbotsford has changed, and the promotion of this suburban expansion of Galashiels appears inconsistent and perverse. It is uncharacteristic that SBC should appear dismissive of concerns about Abbotsford and so ready to accept the developer's claims.

Here is what Officers say (my emphasis):

*The site is located within the Countryside Around Towns area as defined by Policy EP6 which in essence seeks to prevent coalescence between existing settlements. **It is not however considered that the development of this site would have an unacceptable harm on the settlements** due to the location of the site adjacent to existing developments and being within a natural setting amongst well established perimeter planting. The policy does not prevent the consideration of the allocation of new sites within the LDP if considered necessary and appropriate.*

The main planning point here is not whether the settlement would be damaged by the proposed development of Netherbarns, but what the effect on Abbotsford would be.

While new housing is proposed for part (approximately half) of the Netherbarns site, the Proposed Plan goes significantly further: the **Galashiels Settlement Boundary** is amended to take in the entire site and it removes the whole of the site from the Countryside Around Towns Policy area. I can see no reason for this, unless the Council, already ill-informed about the sensitivities of Netherbarns, feels that the rest of the site could also be developed over time.

By contrast, if the site were to remain outwith the Galashiels settlement boundary, and within the Countryside Around Towns Policy area, then the rural character of some modest development there could be underlined. The resulting resolution of the settlement edge, the reduction of the impact of nearby development on Abbotsford and

the Designed Landscape, and the long-term protection and enhancement of the setting of Abbotsford would all accord with the aims of the Countryside Around Towns Policy. The policy could also justify financial support from the Council for tree planting / landscaping / access.

Housing Supply

It is helpful to see in the papers before the Council meeting of September 2020, *“The MIR in paragraph 3.3 notes that “it is not anticipated the LDP2 will require a significant number of new housing sites”. The purpose of the MIR was to identify a number of site options and present those to the public so that the Local Development Plan (LDP) 2 could then be informed by their responses.”* All the more curious, then, that Netherbarns should have reached the Proposed LDP.

I also note the 2014 findings of Reporter Richard Dent, written when land supply was indeed scarce, *“It has been concluded that the housing land designations in the local development plan are unlikely to satisfy the strategic requirement. However, the local issues pointing to the deletion of site AGALA029, Netherbarns are so compelling that they are not to be set aside by wider considerations.”*

Conclusion

Abbotsford and its surrounding landscape form a cultural heritage asset of international importance, and I fear that SBC has singularly failed to understand and ensure the protection which they so clearly deserve. They have not realised that the implicitly suburban nature of the current proposals would represent an unwelcome and damaging expansion of Galashiels over the Kingsknowes shoulder, into the Tweed valley and into the principal focus of Abbotsford. (When Scott knew he would soon die, he had his bed moved to the dining room, with the express desire of being able to look out over the Tweed.)

The preparation of this objection has made me wonder more than ever why SBC, yet again, appears so determined to push through these second-rate proposals. No-one who has read previous Reporters’ findings could imagine that the current proposals are anywhere near to being acceptable. The promotion of Netherbarns in the 2018 draft plan, even as an alternative site, was beyond the comprehension of many.

By contrast, if some modest development were allowed, rural in character and with lots of tree-planting, then a transition from hard suburban edge to wooded countryside could be achieved, and the long-term setting of Abbotsford enhanced and protected. Then perhaps this saga, which has run for almost two decades, could be brought to a close.

I therefore ask that

- i) all reference to the proposed allocation for 45 houses at Netherbarns should be removed from the LDP;
- ii) that the Galashiels settlement boundary should be amended so as to exclude both the Netherbarns site and neighbouring Netherbarns Farmhouse and steading;
- iii) that the site, and neighbouring Netherbarns Farmhouse and steading, should fall within the Countryside Around Towns Policy area, and
- iv) that the Netherbarns site should be identified for a small number of houses of rural character within a wooded landscape. Given that even a large number of trees cannot provide screening until they have reached a certain size, I would ask that building work should not be allowed to begin until sufficient tree growth has been achieved.

I would be happy to give further evidence, by writing or in person, if that might be helpful and I consent to SBC passing my email address to the Reporters' office.

Yours faithfully,

Nicholas Watson

Email: 

Associated Documents

Much further detail is contained in my earlier 2019 objection, (submission 313 in response to the MIR), which I ask, please, should be taken into account alongside this submission.

Also the Abbotsford Trustees 2019 submission, number 310 in response to the MIR.

Contributor 39's submission in response to the MIR.

Background study for the Countryside Around Towns Policy.

Photographs.

Netherbarns MIR Consultation Response, January 2019

At the last Local Plan preparation, Reporter Richard Dent's rejection of development at Netherbarns appeared conclusive. Housing proposals at Netherbarns have now been dismissed by reporters four times, in clearly explained and consistent terms; to paraphrase, "Do not put such important heritage assets (Abbotsford) at risk." Despite this, planners believe that 45 units (exactly the same number as was rejected last time) would now be acceptable at Netherbarns because houses could be re-positioned away from areas of the site most likely to be visible from Abbotsford House; further screen planting would be undertaken, and glimpses of the new development would only be seen in the winter months when Abbotsford House is closed to the public.

I take these three matters in turn.

ONE The topography of the site is extremely difficult (in relation to Abbotsford). Having recently visited Abbotsford and the surrounding area yet again, and having studied the developer's latest proposals, I do not accept that forty-five units could be accommodated without substantial impact on Abbotsford. Even if they could be hidden from the house itself, that would not satisfy planning policy. In addition to Abbotsford, the gardens and designed landscape are recognized as being of outstanding value and of international significance; arguably they are as worthy of protection from damage as the house itself is. The Netherbarns site is highly visible in the wider landscape, not just in views from Abbotsford and from the designed landscape, but also in views towards them, from the Southern Upland Way, for instance. Planners do not appear to have taken this into account. Historic Scotland's guidance makes it clear that the setting of cultural assets should be protected, and "*It should be noted that it is not sufficient that the listed building and the new development will not be intervisible.*" (From Historic Scotland's July 2009 appraisal of the Netherbarns site, LTR/TD093/29/RSB.)

The degree to which a particular place's setting deserves protection may be related to the building's purpose and design. For instance, protecting the integrity of a listed mill building might not involve as much care for its surroundings as would be afforded to a more outward-looking building. Abbotsford is, to quote from the same letter from Historic Scotland, "... a highly landscape orientated set piece..." whose public rooms were all "... designed to take full advantage of the view... directly across the river Tweed to where the Netherbarns site is located." Only rarely can development reasonably be opposed simply because it would be visible. In this case it should be. Netherbarns is smack in the principal view upon which Scott focused Abbotsford, and suburban development is completely at odds with Abbotsford's rural setting. If houses could have "personal space", Netherbarns would be in Abbotsford's. Of course more recent development, including that at

Netherbank and Kingsknowes, already has a negative impact on Abbotsford, but that impact needs to be mitigated, not aggravated. Significant tree-planting at Netherbarns, on at least half of the site, would go a long way to achieving this mitigation over time. Netherbarns used to be in an Area of Great Landscape Value, and it could be of great value again if thoughtfully planted!

It is good that the developer is mindful of the orientation of the houses and of principal glazed areas in relation to Abbotsford, and the proposed colour palette appears to have improved too, but such changes are not sufficient to allay the overall suburban impact of the proposed development.

The developer's Design Code acknowledges that noise is a disturbance, identifying the need for windows on the new houses to have enhanced acoustic capabilities, "*... so as to mitigate against potential noise disturbance from events at Abbotsford.*" Noise from the development, including that of garden machinery, people, music and traffic, not to mention construction noise, could not be prevented from traveling from Netherbarns to Abbotsford, and would considerably add to the suburban effect.

TWO While further landscaping would of course be helpful, and growth of the tree strips planted a decade or so ago is welcome, to suggest that further planting would mitigate the development of forty-five houses is simplistic. Given the site topography, substantive screening cannot be achieved quickly. By all means plant more trees now, with considered advice on views to and from Abbotsford and its designed landscape, but a development of this scale on this site cannot responsibly begun without proper screening already in place. (Advice was sought by the developer some years ago but has not, I believe, been fully acted upon.) The developer's submissions make it clear that their own landscaping, which they say would sufficiently screen the development, would take several years to be effective.

By far the most important screening element is the strip of (mostly beech) trees along the riverside, (not within the developer's control), which in summer affords significant screening of the site. However, these trees are past maturity and cannot be relied upon to provide substantive screening. Here is an extract from Reporter Richard Hickman's 2007 findings: "*... the major tree belt along the river cannot be relied upon to provide an effective screen, either at present (in winter conditions and from higher elevations) or in the future (at all times and from lower as well as higher elevations).*" The weakness of this tree screen has been repeatedly highlighted since, and the trees' condition has in fact deteriorated in recent years, yet planners appear not to have taken account of this major factor.

The developer's submissions rely very heavily on the effectiveness of this tree belt, and propose its reinforcement, but do not appear to recognise its vulnerability.

There is mention of the TPO, but a Tree Preservation Order can prevent neither the natural decline of a tree, nor storm damage! The developer's submissions acknowledge proposals in the ALMP which involve felling and restocking of parts of this mature tree belt; "*This process will temporarily open up views both into the site and beyond to existing properties at Netherbank.*" Temporarily, in this case, would likely mean decades: all the more reason not to bring forward development plans for Netherbarns.

THREE It may well be argued that impact on Abbotsford in winter is less grave than in summer when visitor numbers are highest, but this is more of an economic argument than a planning one. Planning policy concerning cultural heritage assets goes way beyond economics, focussing on the intrinsic value of the asset to be protected, understanding that special places deserve protection because they are special. In order to receive protection year-round there is no requirement that a heritage asset need to be open to the public year-round, (or indeed open to the public at all). Such policy cannot be cast aside on seasonal grounds. Furthermore, to suggest that visitors aren't around in the winter months is simply wrong. As far as I know the Hope-Scott wing is available all year round, and various functions are still held in the house, while the grounds are open to families and walkers all through the year.

Nor can it be assumed that winter use of the house will remain low. Judging by the growing number of initiatives being undertaken at Abbotsford, both inside and outside the house, I would not be surprised to see much more going on in winters to come.

In the Heritage Assessment carried out for the developer, paragraph 7.3 of the Conclusion states, "*The Landscape and Visual Appraisal prepared by Brindley Associates demonstrates that, development delivered within the limits set by the Landscape and Development Framework, **would be visible from Abbotsford during winter and for the first few years...***" This, one might have expected, would be sufficient material for planners to reject the proposals. But the next paragraph goes on to say, "... *development of the land for residential use would preserve the special interest of Abbotsford House and the values of the Abbotsford Garden and Designed Landscape **throughout the year.***" (My emphasis.) It is hard to believe these two paragraphs were authored by the same person: the Heritage Assessment cannot be credited.

A Broader Visitor Experience at Abbotsford

It is encouraging to see how much the experience of visitors to Abbotsford has been widened over the last decade. This is the result not only of physical changes, such

as the visitors' centre, the opening of new paths and thinning of trees, but also the significant broadening of the visitor base, to include disadvantaged children who may have had no experience of the Borders countryside, and those who suffer mentally who find fulfillment working in Scott's gardens and woods. The Abbotsford trustees should be commended not just for their conservation of Abbotsford, but for their outstanding efforts to help people engage with Scott's creation and the countryside which he loved and understood so well. The remarkable thing is that even two centuries on, we can still experience what Scott wanted his visitors to experience so long ago. We must resist that which would threaten such valuable experience.

One group whose experience of Abbotsford has been improved is walkers. Walkers are important to the Borders, year-round, and notably to Melrose whose paths group has helped open several new walks through Abbotsford's designed landscape. Abbotsford's woodland to the south-west of the house has been carefully thinned, and walkers there are now able to enjoy views over the Tweed. Views from this woodland, and from the B6360 road above it, take in the Netherbarns site. Such views are already spoiled by what feels like an overflow of modern Galashiels into the Tweed valley. To compound that effect by allowing forty-five new houses would be most damaging. Conversely it can be seen how tree-planting at Netherbarns on a sufficient scale would mitigate that effect over time.

Photomontages

I have looked carefully at the photomontages. While they are helpful in indicating the position of the proposed houses, they fail to clearly show to what extent they would be visible through the trees in winter. Also, although they include a principal views from the house, they do not include other views from the designed landscape or views across the site towards Abbotsford, for instance from the Southern Upland Way.

The existing development at Netherbank is barely visible in the Photomontages (Date and Time 20 / 4 / 2018 - 12.32pm). This photomontage is not helpful, because while the trees are apparently not in leaf, they must not be simply regarded as such: in late April the buds are already swollen. Viewpoint 02, in the same document, is described as being taken from ground floor level. This might be better described as basement level. Photomontages based on photographs taken from any of the principal public rooms, all designed to take advantage of views across the Tweed would be more useful.

The other photomontages, included in the developer's Landscape and Visual Appraisal, do include a view from a higher point, Viewpoint 02 : Dressing Room - First Floor of Abbotsford House (I am not certain whether or not this is the same

floor as the public rooms). These photomontages, in which the existing houses at Netherbank appear only to be glimpsed through the leafless trees, substantially fail to illustrate the potential impact of the proposed development. I am absolutely certain that **in winter months the houses at Netherbank can be clearly seen through the trees**, even from the basement level and more clearly still from the public rooms. This is especially true when sunlight accentuates contrasts. I know that differences in light can make a big difference to what can be seen, but as a document which ought to aid assessment of potential impact it is largely useless. While the trees do not appear to be in bud, I note that the date of photography is not given, only *Winter - 12.20pm*. I do not have a photograph to show how Netherbank is highly visible through the trees in winter, but I would urge that such evidence be sought.

Conclusion

In short, I do not believe the developer's proposed improvements amount to more than tinkering with the deeply flawed proposal (same number of houses) which was dismissed outright in 2014. It is therefore astonishing that planners have allowed their interest in the site to be re-awakened, especially when a much lesser scheme of twelve houses maximum was dismissed at the same time.

If the present proposals are allowed then future generations will question how a civilized country could ever have allowed a suburban development to be built, as I once heard it described, "smack in the face of a national treasure." Forty-five houses, or even half the number, would inevitably constitute a suburban development which could not but damage the setting and experience of Abbotsford.

Even if partially screened, the development of forty-five houses at Netherbarns would give the overall impression of a suburban development. As well as the actual buildings; vehicles and roads, streetlights, noise and light would all be much more noticeable than the existing field, unavoidably adding to the suburban effect. To quote again from Reporter Richard Hickman's 2007 findings, "*... this is a particularly sensitive landscape, where even a very minor intrusion of alien elements is likely to mar the perceived experience of visitors, many of whom will have travelled a great distance to visit Abbotsford, with correspondingly high expectations.*"

I do not accept planner's view that material changes would allow the development of forty-five houses at Netherbarns without significant adverse effect on Abbotsford and its designed landscape. On the contrary, given the uncertain state of the major tree screen along the riverside, and the new breadth of visitors' experience at Abbotsford, I now believe that such development is potentially more damaging than ever, and I strongly object to it.

I therefore respectfully request that the current proposal be removed from the draft plan. (I would not object to development at Netherbarns if it were restricted to the Alternative Proposal set out below.)

Alternative to the MIR proposal

By contrast with the proposed allocation of forty-five units, a modest level of development, made up of **a few houses and some really worthwhile areas of new woodland could give the overall impression, not of a partially screened suburban development, but of a handful of houses in a wooded landscape.**

This is a crucial distinction which I believe should govern any future plans for development of the site. This approach could minimise damaging impact on Abbotsford, and, if the woodland is properly planned, mitigate the negative impact of existing development nearby. I am mindful that in 2014 Reporter Richard Dent rejected a similar proposal with a maximum of twelve houses. Clearly the number would depend on various factors, including house type. Given the topography of Netherbarns, it would be much easier, both in terms of groundworks and of visual impact, to accommodate low buildings of shallow depth, perhaps of cottage style, (not bungalows).

CAT Policy

The Countryside Around Towns Policy, in its simplest form, is about preventing inappropriate creep of development into the countryside. Despite its proximity to existing buildings, the Netherbarns site is distinctly rural in character, and holds an important position against what might be called the un-natural creep of Galashiels out of its own valley and over the Kingsknowes shoulder into the Tweed valley. This is quite apart from potential damage to Abbotsford. While the CAT policy itself may be up for amendment as part of the Local plan process, development at Netherbarns would be completely at odds with the intentions of the policy, which presumably have not changed.

Nicholas Watson Jan 2019

Please consider the attached Reporters' findings as part of this submission: they are very substantially relevant to the current MIR proposal, setting out the breadth of consideration required for this highly sensitive case. Although the number of units considered in 2006 / 7 was higher, the importance of Abbotsford as a heritage asset, the range of sensitive receptors, and the vulnerability of the major tree belt along the river are just as relevant today, if not more so. In the 2014 findings, note the rejection of the suggestion of 12 houses maximum.

While these Reporters' findings may not constitute planning policy itself, it is difficult to understand why they do not appear to have been taken on board by Scottish Borders Council. It is unfortunate that the Council's apparent determination to allocate Netherbarns for suburban development has considerably dented public confidence in the planning process in the Borders.

EXTRACT from Report of Scottish Borders Local Plan Inquiry. Reporter's findings, 2014

Galashiels Settlement Profile and Map (pages 320 – 331)

Reporter:

Richard Dent

Body or person(s) submitting a representation raising the issue (including reference number):

116 Dr S Davies 172 Stavert 334 Ballantyne Ltd 357 Scottish Environment Protection Agency 378 McDevitt

434 The Board of Trustees of The Abbotsford Trust 482 N Watson

Provision of the

Housing Allocation AGALA029 – Netherbarns

Reporter's conclusions:

1. Site AGALA029, Netherbarns, is allocated for housing. There is also a site requirement to consider the need to provide educational facilities on the site. The site lies on rising ground on the north bank of the River Tweed, between the river and the A7. To the south-east, on the opposite bank of the River Tweed is the designated Abbotsford Garden and Designed Landscape within which is situated, Abbotsford, the home of Sir Walter Scott, a category A listed building.
2. Development has previously been proposed for the Netherbarns site. An appeal against the refusal of planning permission was dismissed in 2007. The matter was further considered at the inquiry into the Scottish Borders Local Plan, adopted 2008. The report of that inquiry accepted without doubt the importance of the locality in terms of landscape, historic and cultural interest, and in respect of tourism, including the international attraction of Abbotsford. Despite some screening - reduced during the winter - it was considered that there would be an increased visual impact on Abbotsford as a consequence of any urban development of Netherbarns. Existing development was acknowledged but the development of the site was regarded as a threshold which should not be crossed. Overall, it was concluded that the development of the site "would be undesirable because of the potential risk of damage to very important landscape, historic, and cultural interests, and to the contribution of tourism to the Borders economy".
3. I have noted the arguments of the council in favour of the development of Netherbarns which include a reference to the withdrawal of objections by Historic Scotland. I also recognise the reduced density of 45 houses now included in the proposed plan and N Watson has suggested a maximum of 12 houses with significant tree planting (although M & J Ballantyne Ltd have indicated that a higher density would be preferable).
4. In addition to the impact on Abbotsford, other concerns have also been expressed, including problems that would be created by the level of traffic generation. I have no reason

to believe that the local road network, including the capacity of the A7, would be incapable of accommodating the additional traffic generated by the development of the site.

5. All-in-all, despite the lack of a formal objection by Historic Scotland, I concur with the conclusions reached at the previous local plan inquiry. It appears to me that cultural and landscape considerations combine to provide an asset which should remain free of the impact of the suggested allocation and any subsequent development of Netherbarns. I do not accept that the woodland screening would adequately mitigate the adverse impacts of the allocation on the setting of the house or the designed landscape. Additionally, the re-opening of the railway link to Galashiels is likely to increase the volume of visitors to Abbotsford, therefore further strengthening the need to protect the heritage of the vicinity. On this basis, I conclude the allocation, including the somewhat obscure reference to educational facilities, should be removed from the proposed plan.

6. In reaching the above conclusion I have noted the strategic housing context which has been examined under Issues 49 and 80. It has been concluded that the housing land designations in the local development plan are unlikely to satisfy the strategic requirement. However, the local issues pointing to the deletion of site AGALA029, Netherbarns are so compelling that they are not to be set aside by wider considerations.

Note: on the basis of the foregoing conclusion it is not necessary to further consider the representation from Scottish Environment Protection Agency in respect of the need for a flood risk assessment.

Reporter's recommendations:

I recommend the following modifications be made:

1. In the Galashiels settlement profile, under the Housing section of the Development and Safeguarding Proposals, delete the reference to site AGALA029, Netherbarns.
2. Delete site AGALA029 from the Galashiels settlement map, including the areas shown for structure planting/landscaping.
3. Amend the text of the settlement profile and remove the reference to two new housing sites (the Birks View site is also recommended for deletion – see Issue 164).
4. House building totals elsewhere in the proposed local development plan should also be adjusted as appropriate.

EXTRACT from Report of Scottish Borders Local Plan Inquiry held between 4 September 2006 and 18 January 2007

Reporters: R M Hickman CBE MA BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI R Bowden BSc (Hons) MPhil MRTPI

Assessment of Netherbarns

There can be no doubt as to the importance of this locality in terms of landscape, historic and cultural interest, and of the international significance of Scott's Abbotsford estate as a tourist destination. It has the potential to make a much greater contribution to the Borders tourist economy.

The critical issue on which nearly all the submissions and debate have focussed is whether the proposed use of the Netherbarns site for housing development would be likely to have an adverse effect on the landscape setting of the house and the wider designed landscape, which would in turn have a negative effect on the enjoyment and interest of the area for

those who visit it, which in turn could undermine the success of the estate as a major tourist destination attracting visitors, and their contribution to the local economy.

The site is well screened in summer in views from Abbotsford House and the river bank, but is visible from the higher parts of the Abbotsford Estate land. Any new development would be visible in winter, viewed through the tree screen when it is not in leaf. I agree that the urban features of the development – buildings; vehicles; and street lighting columns – would be much more noticeable than the existing green field.

I also note the concerns about the continuing future effectiveness of the tree screen, particularly the large and mature beech trees along the river bank. It is agreed that many of these are of a considerable age, dating from Scott's time or a little later. Their ageing state, limited remaining lifespan, risk of removal on safety grounds, and the slow and difficult process of gradually renewing and maintaining the tree belt to provide an effective screen was not disputed at the hearing.

I therefore agree with objectors that the major tree belt along the river cannot be relied upon to provide an effective screen, either at present (in winter conditions and from higher elevations) or in the future (at all times and from lower as well as higher elevations). I also accept that this is a particularly sensitive landscape, where even a very minor intrusion of alien elements is likely to mar the perceived experience of visitors, many of whom will have travelled a great distance to visit Abbotsford, with correspondingly high expectations.

I accept that there are already some unfortunate intrusions in some of the views. However I agree with the expert objectors who consider that the quality of the landscape is still worth protecting, but is at a tipping point when any further encroachment will cause significant harm. In this regard, I agree that it would be very undesirable for the Galashiels urban area to extend any further to the south along the Tweed valley, and that to release the Netherbarns site would set a very strong precedent for development of the next field to the south, which exhibits very similar characteristics, and has a similar relationship with the designed landscape.

Some supporters of development at Netherbarns may regard the proposal as justified because of the need to meet the structure plan housing requirement. However other housing sites have been put forward through objections to the local plan, and the Council has already started a review to meet future housing needs. Even if there were to be a predicted shortfall in this local plan, the 70 units at this site would make only a limited and short term contribution to meeting the need. In contrast, the recognised local, national, and international assets of this locality are part of the long term heritage of the area, deserving long term protection and the benefit of the precautionary principle if there is any risk or doubt about their future safeguarding.

Conclusions

Development of the site would be undesirable because of the potential risk of damage to very important landscape, historic, and cultural interests, and to the contribution of tourism to the Borders economy.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 25 January 2019 11:53
To: localplan <localplan@scotborders.gov.uk>
Subject: proposed use of the Netherbarns site (Grid Ref NT50466 34506)

Dear Sirs

I wish to lodge an objection to the proposed use of the Netherbarns site for housing development.

The Chair of the Board of Trustees of The Abbotsford Trust, James Holloway, has already submitted what I assume is the judgement of Abbotsford in this matter, and I concur with what he has written.

[REDACTED] Abbotsford since 2012, and in that capacity would like to add the following:

1. Abbotsford is an unique and historic literary house and as such attracts visitors from all around the world. In addition to their wish to visit the house built by Scotland's greatest-ever writer, what attracts them is the overall environment and ambience of the estate and the landscape and its sense of peace and tranquility. What they experience is, of course, what Scott intended - a sanctuary for a writer, a place to reflect on history and philosophy. This has always been felt within the confines of the walled gardens, the surrounding woodlands, and the aspect to the north of the house, facing as it does, the Tweed and the Border hills and meadows beyond. With the recent development of the pathways and woodland towards the river, this aspect of visiting Abbotsford has been enhanced - it is greatly appreciated both by visitors and locals as an area of outstanding beauty and tranquility. I have no doubt that a housing development at Netherbarns, being directly across the river, and in full view of Abbotsford, would seriously diminish the peace and enjoyment for many.

2. Over the past year I have contributed to a new development at Abbotsford - tours around the gardens, not primarily to talk about horticultural matters, but to describe the vision behind Scott's plans and layout. An important component of the tour is to conduct visitors to the north terrace (i.e. facing the Tweed). For Scott, this was a Picturesque Landscape (Picturesque: an aesthetic ideal pioneered in 1782 by William Gilpin, combining the beautiful and sublime in landscape) and he developed that area having been influenced by that artistic movement. That is another reason why a housing development right in the middle of it is inappropriate. But more than that, Scott suffered bouts of depression and found succour in contemplating landscape in general, and his Picturesque Landscape in particular. Abbotsford has already discussed (with Visit Scotland for instance) promoting that aspect; that is, its attraction to visitors in general, and to special groups in particular. The

special groups would include visits from residents of care homes, individuals with learning difficulties and so on. This is the concept of "nature as nurse", or "the therapeutic landscape", increasingly important in the non-pharmaceutical treatment of mental disorders. And again I stress that this initiative would be seriously hampered with the development at Netherbarns.

May I add that I also write this as [REDACTED] with a particular interest in mental health therapies. That experience leads me to believe that Abbotsford has a pioneering role to play in The Scottish Borders in what I describe in (2) above. As such, the preservation of the pastoral environment in and around Abbotsford is of crucial importance - housing development at Netherbarns would be highly detrimental. I am happy to discuss this further at any time with your Planning Department.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

Appendix 2: Central Borders Coalescence Study – Technical Note

1. Introduction

The Central Borders Coalescence Study is an exercise aimed at identifying and protecting areas of undeveloped land between settlements to prevent coalescence from occurring. The aim is to safeguard individual character and ensure the provision of greenspace for the local community.

The *Scottish Borders Structure Plan 2001-2011* identifies the Central Borders as a preferred area of growth, with a specific emphasis on the Galashiels-Melrose-St Boswells corridor. Policy EP3 – *Prevention of Settlement Coalescence* in the *Scottish Borders Finalised Local Plan 2005* has proposed the countryside between Darnick and Melrose as a protected area. This policy also states that it is the intention of the Council to identify further areas that may need to be safeguarded by this policy. The Central Borders Coalescence Study is therefore responding to this objective.

Policy EP3 was objected to at the Local Plan Inquiry and discussed at a hearing on 4th December 2006. In the Reporter's conclusions, he underlined the importance of recognising the separate historical origins of settlements within this area and the need to protect its green and open character. Moreover, he encouraged that further research be undertaken to consider other areas in need of protection. An extension to the policy area was therefore recommended and the resultant modification was accepted by the Reporter as a part of the Reporter's Examination Report on the Finalised Local Plan Amendment in September 2010. The Finalised Local Plan Amendment was considered by the Council on 28 October 2010 and the Reporter's modifications were accepted.

A Scottish Borders Development & Landscape Capacity Study has been carried out for the areas around Galashiels, Melrose, Darnick & Gattonside. This study had four main objectives:

- A landscape character assessment to identify potential areas for housing development
- An analysis of the character areas around settlements
- An identification of key design issues for individual sites
- Landscape guidance to help integrate new development into the wider landscape

The findings from the Development & Landscape Capacity Study have guided and influenced the approach taken by this current project, both through its identification of area where the landscape is considered to be constrained for development and through the proposed landscape enhancements that have been proposed.

2. Policy context

In February 2010 the Scottish Government published the document Scottish Planning Policy (SPP). SPP updated a number of Scottish Planning Policies including SPP21: Green Belts.

The SPP section on Green Belts states that the purpose of green belt designation is to

- direct planned growth to the most appropriate locations and support regeneration
- protect and enhance the quality, character, landscape setting and identity of towns and cities, and
- protect and give access to open space within and around towns and cities

The document states that Green Belt design should provide clarity and certainty on where development will and will not take place. Green Belt designation should be used to direct development to suitable locations, not to prevent development from happening. For towns and cities with a distinct character and identity that could be harmed by unplanned growth, Green Belt designation and relevant policies may help to manage that growth more effectively.

It is also stated that Green Belts can encircle settlements but can also take other forms including buffers, corridors, coastal strips or wedges. Green Belt designation can be used to prevent coalescence, where it would not create a sustainable settlement pattern.

Local Plan Policy EP3 – *Prevention of Settlement Coalescence* is aimed at preventing the merging of these Central Borders settlements. Currently, the Local Plan has identified the countryside between Darnick and Melrose as an area in need of protection using Policy EP3. This recognises the distinct character and setting of these two settlements. The study now seeks to expand this area, extending the area from Galashiels to St Boswells (see Map 1). There are two other Local Plan policies that are particularly applicable to this study (see Map 2):

- **BE3: Gardens and Designed Landscapes** – this aims to protect the character of historically important sites within the landscape and ensure that development does not damage the integrity of their design and context. This policy protects Abbotsford and Chiefswood within the Central Borders Coalescence Study area.
- **EP1: National Scenic Areas** – this aims to prevent development that may compromise the scenic qualities of the National Scenic Area. This policy is appropriate because the Central Borders Coalescence Study area encompasses parts of the Eildon and Leaderfoot NSA.

Other Local Plan policies applied to this area include:

Table 1: Policy context

Policy	Aim
EP2: <i>Areas of Great Landscape Value</i>	To safeguard landscape quality.
G8: <i>Development Outwith Development Boundaries</i>	To ensure that most development is contained within Development Boundaries.
NE1: <i>International Nature Conservation Sites</i>	To give wildlife sites of international importance adequate protection from development.
NE2: <i>National Nature Conservation Sites</i>	To prevent development from having an adverse affect on SSSIs.
NE3: <i>Local Biodiversity</i>	To safeguard and enhance local biodiversity.
NE4: <i>Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows</i>	To give protection to the woodland

	resource and in turn to protect the character of settlements & countryside.
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3. Objectives

The overarching aim of the study is:

- To identify additional areas in the Central Borders to be protected by Policy EP3.

Three further objectives are integral to this study:

1. To protect and enhance the character, landscape and identity of settlements within the Galashiels-Melrose-St Boswells corridor.
2. To provide countryside for recreational purposes, both formal and informal.
3. To direct development to brownfield sites within settlements.

4. Methodology

To determine what areas should be identified for further protection, a survey combining site visits and GIS mapping was undertaken. This study was also influenced by the Scottish Borders Development & Landscape Capacity Study, both in terms of the survey and the long term proposals that this study has identified.

A survey area was identified stretching from Galashiels to St Boswells (please see Map 1). The outer boundary of this area was based on contours lines, using 200m or 250m dependent on the local topography. In areas where this was not possible, other landscape features were used including: tree belts, roads, rivers and steep slopes. A wide survey area was chosen in order to identify the areas in most need of protection.

The survey area was sectioned into grids and numbered (see Map 2 for grid plan). Each of these grids was then marked on the following criteria: Biodiversity, Landscape, Accessibility and Historical value. Scores were then given to each grid reference combining the following information:

1. GIS Mapping

Information provided by the GIS was used to determine the grid scoring. The scoring was based on a series of issues:

Table 2: Biodiversity Criteria

Criteria	Score	Rank
SAC, SPA, Ramsar, NNR, SSSI LWS	3	High
AWI, Existing Woodland, Borders Grass, GCN Classified Natural Heritage Site, Borders Wetland Inventory, Community woodland, Hedgerow, Open water sites,	2	Medium
SSNWI, LCM 2000 sub-categories: Bog, Calcareous, dwarf shrub heath, open dwarf shrub heath None of the above	1	Low

Existing spatial datasets were used to score the study area based on the presence/absence of features within each survey grid square.

Table 3: Landscape criteria

Criteria	Score	Rank
AGLV, NSA, Ancient Woodland, Slope >20 degrees	3	High
Landscape Constraints (Alison Grant), TPO, Water Course	2	Medium
None of the above	1	Low

Existing spatial datasets were used to score the study area mainly based on the presence/absence of features within each survey grid square.

Table 4: Recreation/Accessibility criteria

Criteria	Score	Rank
Core Path >3000m; Cycle Network >7000m; Road Network >6000m	3	High
Core Path 1000-3000m; Cycle Network 1000-7000m; Road Network 1000m-6000m	2	Medium
Core Path <1000m; Cycle Network <1000m; Road Network <1000m	1	Low

Scoring was based on the length of transport route within each grid square.

Table 5: Historical criteria

Criteria	Score	Rank
SMR >10 sites, HGDL, SAM, Listed Building	3	High
SMR 5-10 sites, within 100m of HGDL, SAM, Listed Building	2	Medium
SMR < 5 sites	1	Low

Presence/absence of features within each survey grid square and proximity to these features was used for scoring. Due to the widespread nature of Archaeological sites (SMR) an overall count within each survey grid square was used.

These marks were then mapped to provide an overall picture of the areas that had been scored within the high quality category. These overall scores were based on the following:

- A high score was given if the overall score was 10 to 12 – this needed at least two of the criteria to receive high scores.

- A medium score was given if the overall score was 8 to 9.
- A low score was given if the overall score was 7 or under.

2. Site surveys

Site visits were also undertaken to check the information provided by the GIS mapping. GIS Mapping was used to identify key issues for each of the criteria. Table 6 lists the information that was used.

Table 6: List of GIS mapping used for each criteria

Biodiversity	Landscape	Accessibility	Historical
Planted areas	AGLV/NSA	Core Path network	Listed buildings
SSSIs/SACs	Ancient woodland	Road network	Archaeological remains
Woodland	Contours	Cycle network	Designed gardens & landscapes
Wetlands	Watercourses	Footpaths	Scheduled Ancient Monuments
Hedgerows	TPOs	Bridleways	
Land Cover Map 2000	20% slopes	Golf courses	
	Landscape Capacity Study	Parks	
		Playing fields	

3. Input from Countryside & Heritage

Specialists from Countryside & Heritage have also assessed GIS mapping and the scores for each of the criteria and contributed their expert knowledge to the end results.

5. Summary of findings

The results for the survey were as follows:

- 54% of the study area was found to be of a high biodiversity value – see Map 3
- 87% of the study area was found to be of high landscape quality – see Map 4
- 58% of the study area was found to be highly accessible – see Map 5
- 63% of the study area was found to be of a high historical value – see Map 6
- Overall, 51% of the study area was scored as high quality (i.e. the area achieved a high score in all or the majority of the categories) – see Map 7

From the mapped results of this survey, a core area has been identified as being of a particularly high value. This area stretches from Tweedbank to Newstead and incorporates iconic sites such as the Eildons and Abbotsford (see Map 8). It is this core area that provides exceptional open space, good recreational opportunities, is very accessible and is of significant historical importance.

There is a potential to not only preserve but improve this area through the proposed landscape enhancements identified in the Development & Landscape Capacity Studies for Gattonside and Melrose (see Map 9). This could be achieved using one of two policy approaches.

6. Policy approaches

Two approaches could be applied to protect this high quality area. These are:

Countryside Around Towns policy

This would take a holistic approach, preventing housing development over a wide area to protect the high quality landscape and recreational resource. The strategy would incorporate the landscape enhancement proposals and emphasise the importance of this area both locally and nationally for recreation and heritage, as well as the outstanding landscape qualities.

Table 9: SWOT for Countryside Around Towns policy

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protects a large area of amenity space • Encompasses a significant number of important landmarks (e.g. landscape features, archaeological remains & biodiversity) • Provide greater long-term flexibility to make adjustments in accordance with future plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would need strong justification for boundaries • Larger area weakens defence of more pressured sites • Housing in the Countryside policy would already protect this area
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holistic approach provides good protection for an important area • Initiate landscape improvements that enhance local area • Provide increasing support for recreation (e.g. walks, cycle routes & heritage tours) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Found to be too restrictive in areas that need less protection • Boundaries might be challenged • No action taken over landscape enhancements

Green Wedge policy

This would be a site specific approach. It would rely primarily on the areas that were identified as constrained sites in the Development & Landscape Capacity Studies for Gattonside and Melrose. Map 10 demonstrates this option. This policy would emphasise the importance of ensuring the character of settlements is preserved and improved. The policy would also encourage a programme of landscape enhancement proposals that are suggested in the Development & Landscape Capacity Studies.

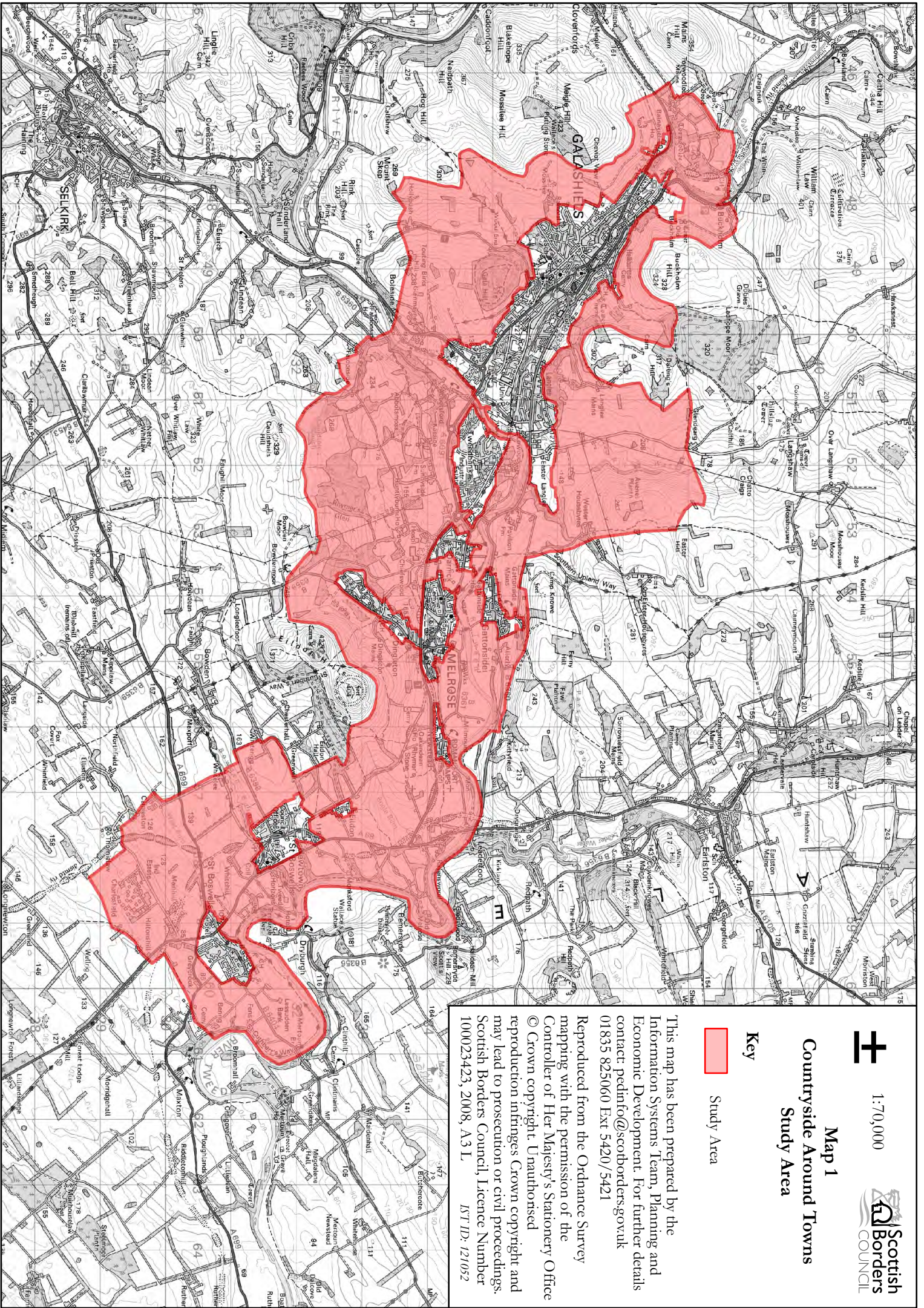
Table 10: SWOT for Green Wedge policy

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contained sites that have strong constraints • Continues the approach already begun in Local Plan • Landscape Enhancement proposals already concentrate on these sites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not encompass the wider area that has been identified as high quality • Does not fully encompass the landscape designations
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landscape enhancements could be undertaken • Concentration on areas most at risk of development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permitted development close to wedges sites might impact on high quality open space • Restrictive in the areas it can protect

7. Conclusions & recommendation

The Countryside Around Towns policy recognises the sensitivity and importance of the wider context, encompassing the recreational and historic value of the area as well as the iconic landscape and settlement settings. Nevertheless, this policy would need to carefully assess the identified area of protection and ensure that further enhancements were made to the landscape as proposed in the Development & Landscape Capacity Studies. The Green Wedges policy approach recognises the importance of ensuring that settlements do not lose their individual character and setting and could concentrate on sites where development pressure has been identified. It would not, however, protect the wider area from piecemeal development (see Map 11 for planning applications received in this area) and does not fully recognise the importance of the landscape setting for the settlements.

This study recommends that the Countryside Around Towns policy approach is taken. This would underline the importance and sensitivity of the wider area and emphasise the recreational opportunities available for local residents and visitors to the area. The proposed landscape enhancements would need to be undertaken to reinforce this approach and could be one several initiatives which promotes the area as an outstanding location for recreation and heritage. In contrast, the Green Wedge policy approach is primarily a preventative measure aimed at solving a local problem. Whilst it could equally incorporate the landscape enhancement proposals, this approach would not fully recognise the value that the entire area holds locally, regionally and nationally. Furthermore, the identification of green wedges gives less long term flexibility as it is site specific and provides a more limited scope for change in terms of sustainable development and recreational opportunities.



Map 1
Countryside Around Towns
Study Area

Key



Study Area

This map has been prepared by the Information Systems Team, Planning and Economic Development. For further details contact: pedinfo@scotborders.gov.uk 01835 825060 Ext 5420/5421

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Map 2
Countryside Around Towns
Survey Grid

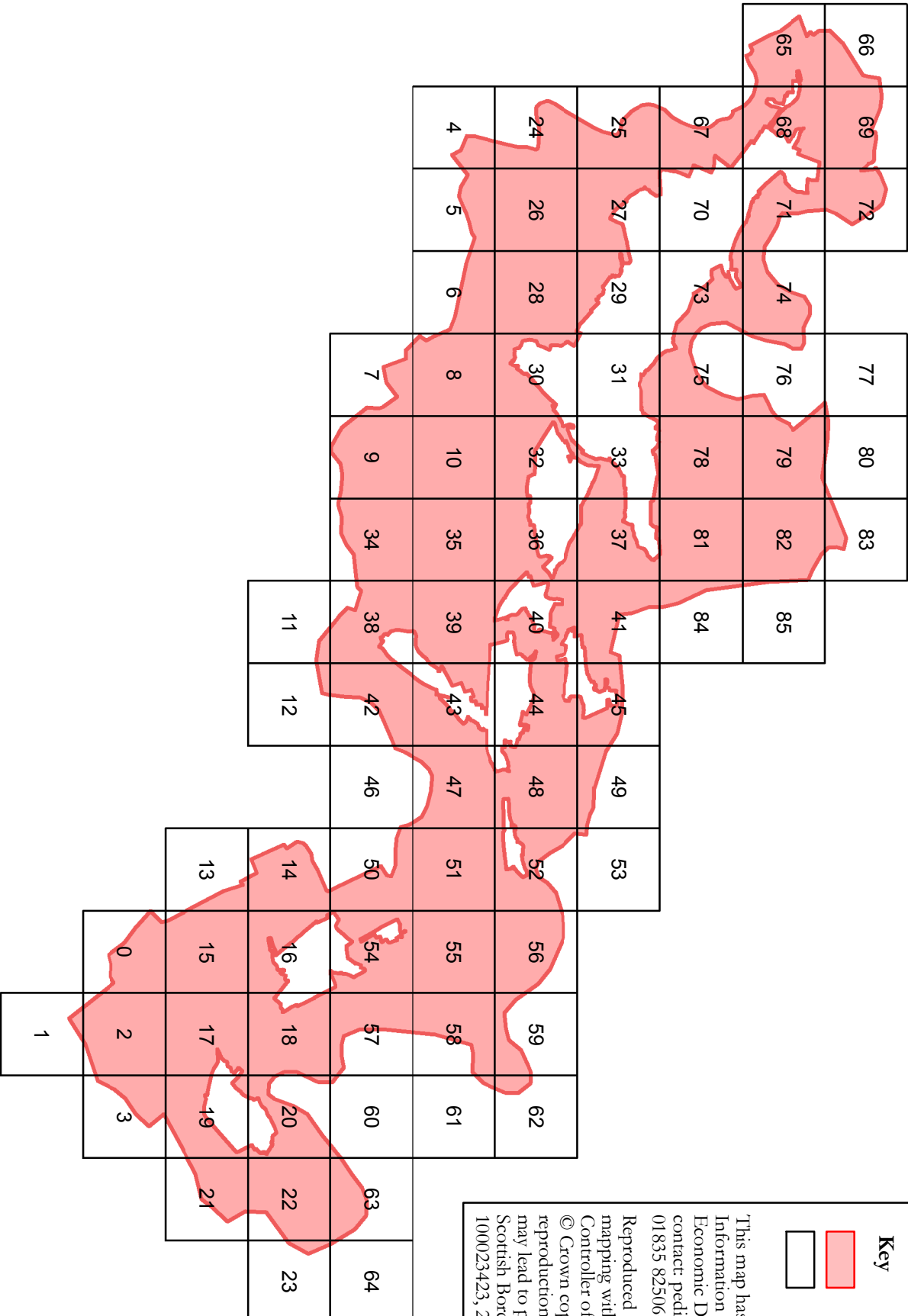
Key



Study Area



Survey Grid



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


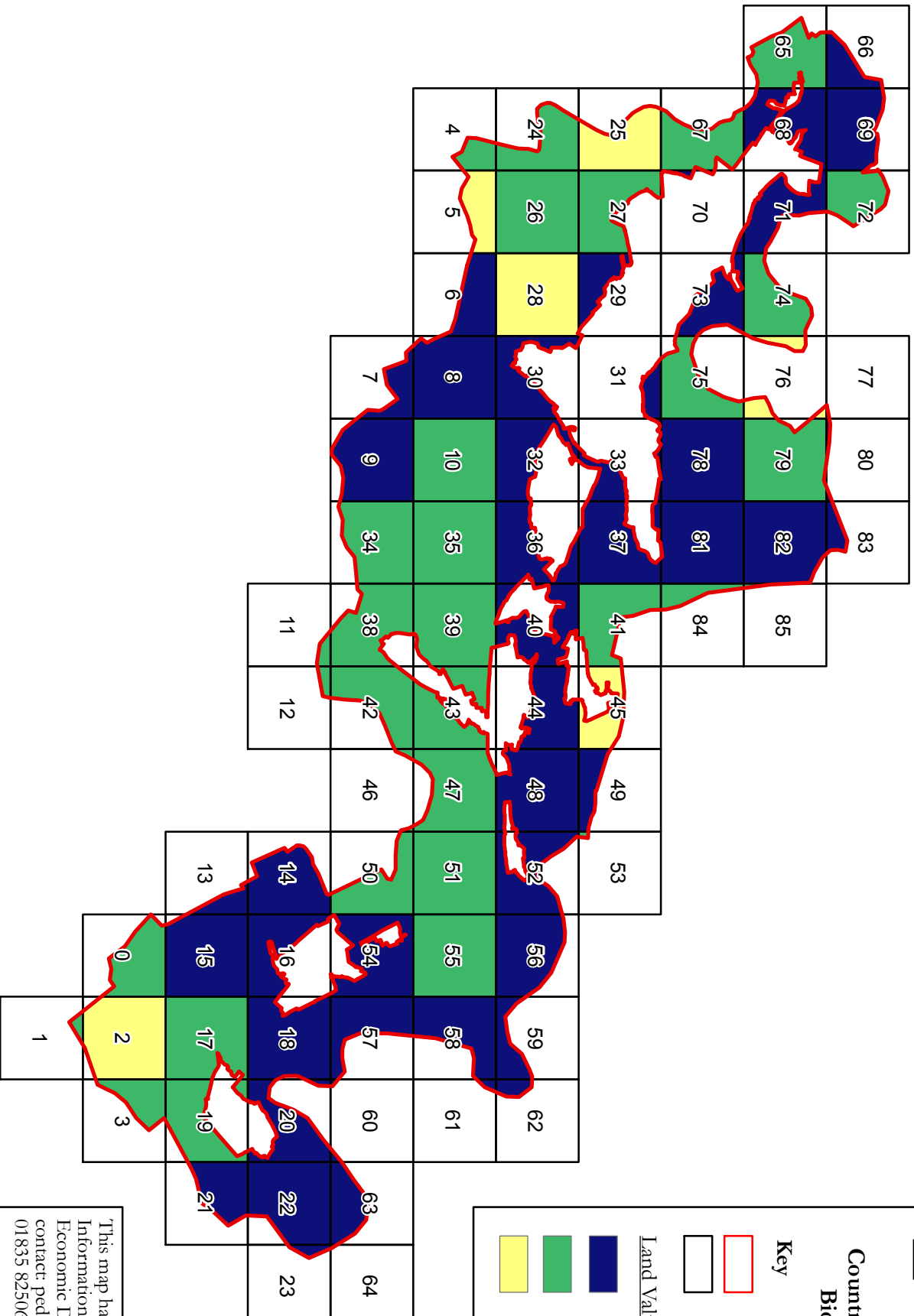
Map 3 Countryside Around Towns Biodiversity Results

Key

-  Study Area
-  Survey Grid

Land Value

-  High
-  Medium
-  Low



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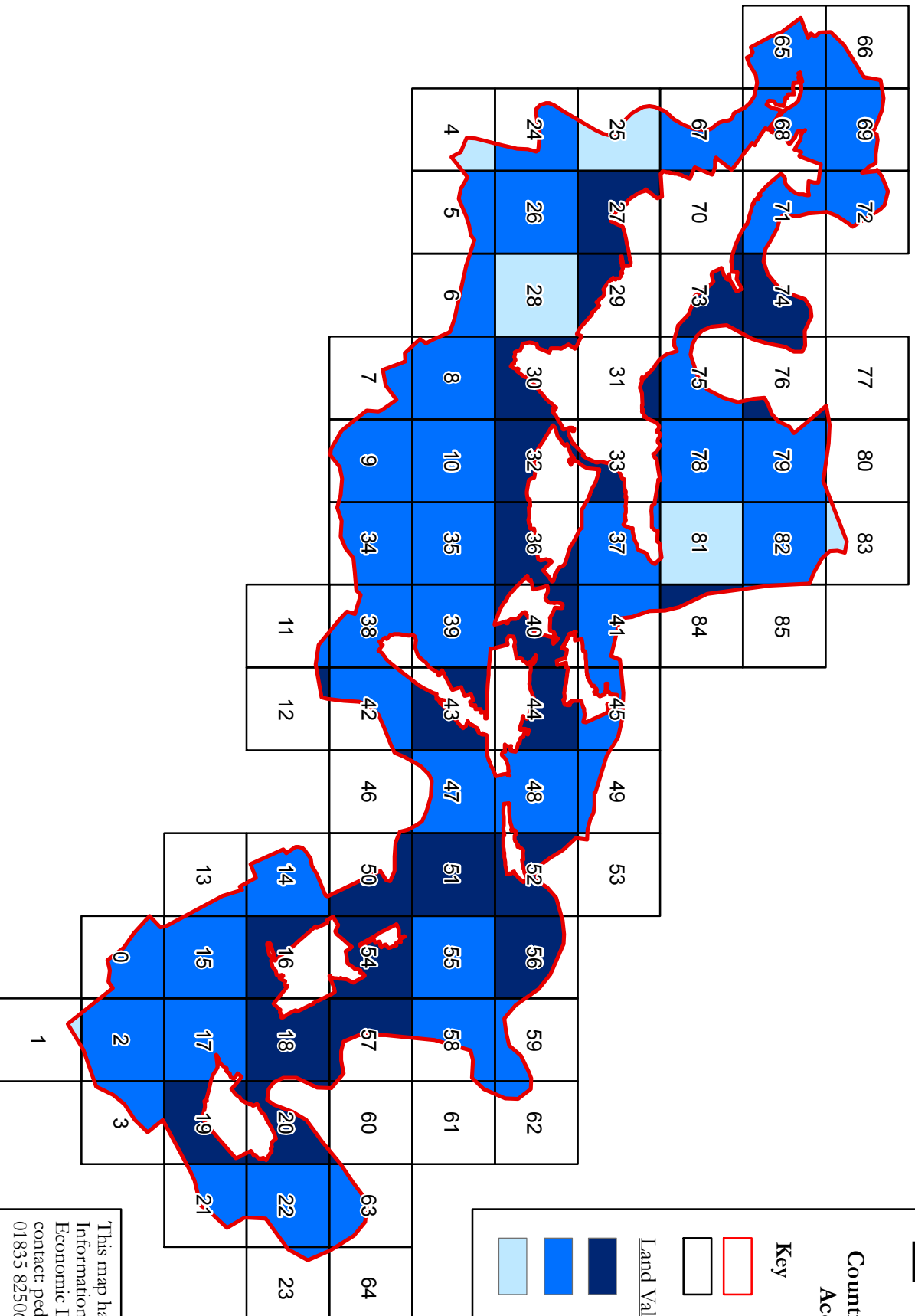
Map 5 Countryside Around Towns Accessibility Results

Key

- Study Area
- Survey Grid

Land Value

- High
- Medium
- Low



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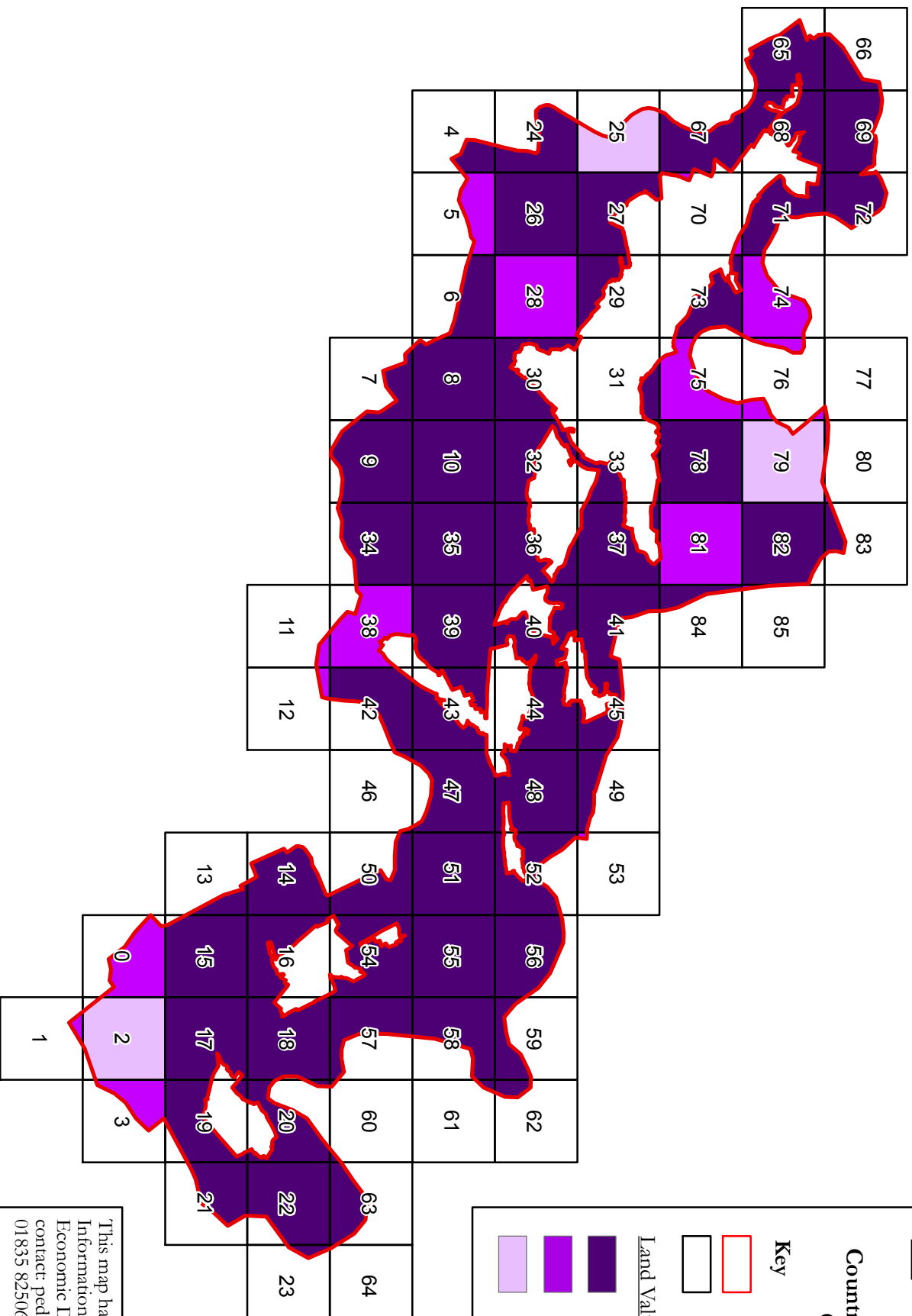
Map 7 Countryside Around Towns Overall Results

Key

- Study Area
- Survey Grid

Land Value

- High
- Medium
- Low



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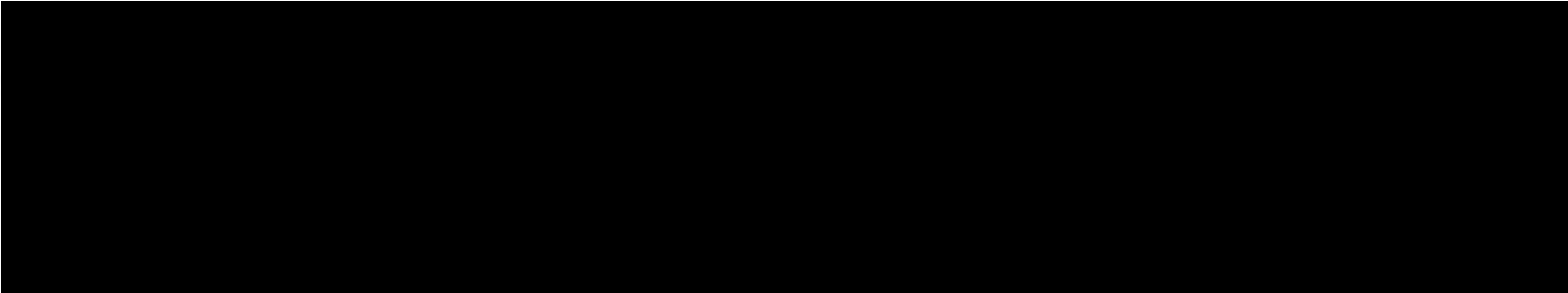












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18 December 2020

Dear Colleague,

As 2020 is nearing a close, we are writing to update you on some of the work we have been doing across the Planning and Architecture Division this year and also to highlight some of our activities over the coming months in relation to the continuing wide reform of Scotland's planning system. That includes progress towards Scotland's fourth National Planning Framework, digital transformation, the implementation of the 2019 Planning Act and the increasing influence of planning in the creation of high quality, sustainable places.

It has of course been a very difficult year for so many reasons, bringing challenges for us across our personal, family and professional lives. Our planning system was no different and had to adjust, and we have been very pleased with the response, our collective willingness and ability to work together, and the agility of the system to make things work in trying circumstances.

While recent progress with the COVID-19 vaccination programme is hugely welcome and we may now be at the beginning of the end of this pandemic, we know for now the virus continues to pose real risks to life and that it is still restricting our lifestyles and our work. So we also take this opportunity to give an update on the temporary legislation and guidance, while we continue to navigate our way through the pandemic and ensure planning is playing an effective and vital part towards our recovery.

Maintaining a functioning planning system and supporting recovery

Back in the spring, the impacts of COVID-19 and the need for physical distancing led us to rethink our most immediate priorities. We did this in rapid collaboration with a number of stakeholders, and we are very grateful for the invaluable input we received.

Emergency legislation

You may be familiar with the suite of primary and secondary legislation from earlier in the year which made some important temporary changes to various aspects of the planning system. Those included: extending the duration of planning permissions that were about to expire; enabling online publication of planning documents instead of at physical locations; and suspending the need for public events in pre-application and plan consultation, which can instead be held virtually. All of this legislation has been extended so that it can continue to be utilised while still needed.

Additionally, a permitted development order temporarily grants planning permission for any necessary emergency healthcare-related facilities to deal with the current crisis, and so give certainty about their planning status. While that order was due to expire at the end of December, a further order was laid in the Scottish Parliament recently which will extend those permitted development rights until 1 July 2021.

The full range of emergency changes made to planning legislation this year have been, and remain, vital in enabling planning processes to continue. While they will remain in place for now, they also remain temporary and will come to an end when the time is right. We are of course keen to learn from experiences and to consider if any best practice is emerging from current arrangements that could be adopted in the longer term.

Relaxing planning control

In addition to that legislation, our letters of [11 March](#), [19 March](#), [3 April](#), [29 May](#) and [2 July](#) all included guidance which recognised the important and helpful role planning can play in enabling businesses and services to diversify and continue to operate during this difficult period. In the main, the most appropriate, straightforward and efficient way planning authorities can allow for reasonable temporary changes is by informally relaxing planning controls; particularly by using their discretion not to take enforcement action against planning breaches that are acceptable in the current circumstances.

While we could not produce an exhaustive list of what that means in practice, nor would we want to limit the reach of this relaxed approach, specific examples have included support for:

- the hospitality industry to provide outdoor seating and takeaway facilities;
- food retail opening times and deliveries outwith their conditioned hours;
- holiday parks to stay open beyond their usual seasons; and
- longer hours of operation on construction sites.

We think this supportive, pragmatic and flexible approach has been reasonable, successful and appreciated. It continues to have a vital part to play in supporting the national response to COVID-19. Continued fair relaxation of planning control can help to maintain economic activity and keep people in jobs, and can also complement efforts to suppress the virus. So we are re-stating our earlier guidance and ask that planning authorities continue to exercise their discretion and allow for temporary breaches of planning control that are reasonable and support businesses to operate and enable services to be provided as safely as possible for our communities.

We will continue to keep this guidance under review over the weeks and months ahead, and it will remain in place until such time as we amend or withdraw it; which we will do after the requirements for physical distancing have been removed.

Safer Public Spaces

The [Safer Public Spaces for Scotland Guidance](#) was updated on 2 November. This guidance is primarily intended for owners and operators of public places and focuses on the design principles for safer urban centres and green spaces. It provides a framework for identifying the issues associated with the use of public places in light of the need for physical distancing, focusing primarily on areas likely to have high footfall, and includes temporary practical interventions for adapting and managing public places. The November update draws a link to [Scotland's Strategic Framework](#) to suppress the virus and the levels-based approach to applying protective measures, and it complements other sectoral guidance.

The update also incorporated comments from stakeholders, including the Mobility Access Committee for Scotland, which highlighted the need to undertake equality impact assessments for changes to the built environment to ensure that equality groups, especially disabled people, are not disadvantaged. Earlier feedback from some groups, including visually impaired and those who require accessible parking spaces, had been that some temporary measures were disadvantaging them.

National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4)

Scotland's fourth National Planning Framework is making progress and is a major exercise in collaboration and radical thinking. NPF4 is going to play a crucial part in the transformation of planning in Scotland, and in how we transition to a net zero agenda and meet our world-leading emissions reduction targets whilst also supporting a green recovery.

On 26 November, we published a Scottish Government [Position Statement](#). It provides an update on our progress towards the preparation of NPF4 and sets out our current thinking, building on the wealth of evidence we received through our Call for Ideas exercise and early engagement activity earlier this year.

The Position Statement is not a formal part of the NPF process; nor is it a draft NPF4 and it does not have any formal status in the planning process. However, the impact of the pandemic on the overall timescale for NPF4 presented this extra opportunity to advance our thinking and inform further discussions before we produce a draft of the framework.

The Position Statement signals a significant shift in the way we think about planning and our places, and a move from the NPF3 focus on 'low carbon' towards a more ambitious 'net zero' agenda for NPF4. We have set out our current thinking over four key themes: net zero emissions; resilient communities; wellbeing economy; and better, greener places.

We hope you are finding the time to read and consider the Position Statement. We are inviting comments on the current thinking and the general direction of travel, which you are welcome to share with us through our [consultation hub](#) by 19 February 2021.

We have also updated the NPF4 [Programme for Engagement](#), and this [blog](#) includes some details of engagement we have planned for the new year. We have provided some resources on our website [transformingplanning.scot](#), including a presentation and accompanying notes, which we hope you will find helpful to update your colleagues, to stimulate discussion and to help inform any comments you wish to pass on to us. We would also draw your attention to the [interactive map of national developments](#) and [update on indicative Regional Spatial Strategies](#) that we published alongside the Position Statement.

We intend to lay the draft NPF4 in the Scottish Parliament in autumn 2021 and at the same time we will conduct extensive public consultation and stakeholder engagement on its contents. We anticipate that NPF4 will be adopted in spring 2022.

Scottish Planning Policy and Housing

In the summer, we consulted on proposed interim changes to the Scottish Planning Policy, in advance of NPF4 being completed. We recognise the level of interest in the consultation and the wide-ranging views expressed. Today, we have published the [Scottish Government's response](#), which summarises the views we received, sets out available evidence and explains our finalised changes to the Scottish Planning Policy. We also published the [updated Scottish Planning Policy](#), incorporating those changes.

Digital Strategy for Planning

On 24 November, we were delighted to launch [Transforming Places Together: Scotland's Digital Strategy for Planning](#). It sets out a framework for a world-leading digital planning system with a series of key missions to deliver that based on people, data, technology, working practices and a culture of innovation. Digital transformation has been a key element of planning reform from the start, integrating with the legislative changes for a planning system that helps connect people with their places, with well-informed decision-making and delivering positive change.

Digital transformation will put reliable, openly available data, technology and innovation at the heart of a planning system that we know will have some big decisions to make about our future places, and for our future health and wellbeing. There is also massive potential for digital to provide new ways to get people involved and have a meaningful influence in the future of their places.

We will follow up this strategy with a £35 million, 5-year transformation programme, which we will launch early next year. There are clear reasons why this is a vital investment. As the Royal Town Planning Institute has estimated, digital transformation could deliver a boost of up to £200m in economic benefits directly to users of the planning system, and wider financial benefits of up to £300m. And it has the potential to create up to 1,600 new jobs in the construction and development sector, and with costs to large house builders reduced by £25-30k per application.

To support the digital strategy, we have produced a suite of user-research evidence, resources and prototypes which you can see at transformingplanning.scot.

Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 implementation

While the impacts of COVID-19 and the need for physical distancing led much of our planned work this year on the implementation of our new Planning Act to be paused, we have made progress on a number of aspects of this work programme lately. We would like to take this opportunity to update on some recent activity and highlight the actions we have prioritised to progress in advance of next year's Scottish Parliament election.

Earlier this week, we laid regulations in the Scottish Parliament covering the arrangements for the designation of short-term let control areas, as introduced by section 17 of the 2019 Act, alongside a related order for a licensing scheme for short-term lets. This follows a consultation carried out during the autumn. Subject to the approval of the Scottish

Parliament, the [Control Area Regulations](#) and the [Licensing Order](#) will come into force on 1 April 2021.

We have been particularly determined that we progress those provisions of the Act which help people to be involved in shaping their future, to reduce conflict and build public trust; even more so having witnessed many examples this year of communities wanting to do their best for the future of their local areas. We consulted recently on improvements to pre-application consultation with local communities on national and major planning applications, and will lay regulations in the Parliament in the new year. And earlier this week, we published a consultation on [draft guidance in relation to the use of mediation in planning](#), on which we are inviting responses by 12 March 2021. We will also consult early in 2021 on the detailed arrangements and guidance for community bodies preparing their own local place plans, so that there will be an opportunity for those plans to be able to influence the first round of local development plans in the new system.

We want those new local development plans to be able to get underway as soon as NPF4 has been adopted, so we will also progress to public consultation on our proposals for development plan regulations and guidance early next year.

Other aspects of the Act, including a number of changes to development management, the introduction of masterplan consent areas and the performance and training provisions, will not be implemented before next year's election. We will provide a further update when we are able.

You can keep up-to-date on the planning reform programme, including consultations and emerging legislation, at transformingplanning.scot.

Review of Permitted Development Rights

We recently consulted on a first phase of new and amended permitted development rights, in which we have prioritised digital infrastructure, agricultural units, peatland restoration and development supporting active travel; due to their potential to support Scotland's green recovery and remote and rural communities. Following careful consideration of the responses we received, today we have [laid an order in the Scottish Parliament](#) including new and extended permitted development rights in relation to those matters discussed in the consultation, and also on further changes relating to aquaculture developments.

We have proposed that the second phase of changes to permitted development rights will include support for our town centres to recover, drawing from the current review of the Town Centre Action Plan.

Place Standard

The Scottish Ministers promote the holistic approach of the Place Principle. It helps us to collaborate and achieve positive outcomes for people and places, supported with use of the highly successful Place Standard tool. This year especially, people understand that the quality and design of our places can have a major impact on our physical and mental health and wellbeing.

Working with our partners Public Health Scotland, Architecture & Design Scotland, the Improvement Service and Glasgow City Council, we have undertaken a refresh of the Place Standard, involving a number of improvements to the tool's usability. This revised version of the tool will be launched alongside a new Place website early in 2021 to promote the

benefits and positive outcomes from place-based working, including support for 20-minute neighbourhoods. This work will be complemented by new specific versions of the Place Standard tool to support design processes and improved engagement with children and young people.

Thank you

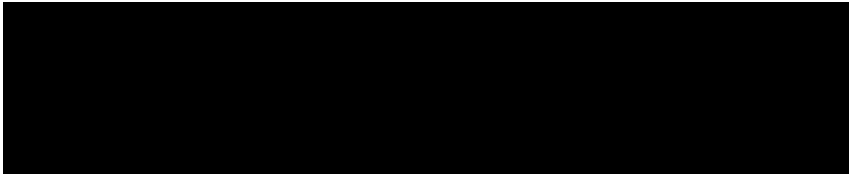
Finally, we want to say thank you for all you have done in very difficult circumstances this year, and we extend that also to our colleagues in the Planning and Architecture Division and elsewhere across the Scottish Government. It has been a tough year but there are good reasons for optimism going into 2021. We hope you will get an opportunity to rest and recharge over the coming weeks and we look forward to working together again next year.

Staying in touch

We hope you have found this update useful. Your feedback is very welcome, including on how we can improve our communication with you. Please send any thoughts you wish to share to chief.planner@gov.scot.

Please also make sure you follow us on Twitter [@ScotGovPlanning](https://twitter.com/ScotGovPlanning) and [@DigiPlanningSG](https://twitter.com/DigiPlanningSG) and register for our [Planning and Building update](#) emails.

Yours faithfully



John McNairney
Chief Planner

Kevin Stewart
Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning

SETTLEMENT PROFILE

GALASHIELS

This profile should be read in conjunction with the relevant settlement map.

DESCRIPTION

Galashiels is located in the Central Borders Strategic Development Area as identified in the SESplan. The population was, at Census 2001, 12,367 making it the second largest settlement in population terms in the Borders, after Hawick.

PLACE MAKING CONSIDERATIONS

Galashiels is in the heart of the Borders and is home to a number of public agencies as well as part of Heriot-Watt University. The recently completed inner relief road, the railway station and the transport interchange will provide further opportunities to develop the town and particularly to realise the redevelopment of redundant buildings and create new jobs. There has been significant growth and change in recent years and the town has been successful in attracting both housing developers and major retailers. There are a number of redevelopment opportunities as well as edge of settlement housing developments. However the topography of the town together with road capacity constraints poses significant challenges for future growth.

The character of Galashiels is mainly established by its town centre and its setting in the steep sided river valley of the Gala Water. The town centre is on the valley floor and is characterised by narrow streets, dating from the nineteenth century, punctuated by public buildings such as the Council Offices and nineteenth century churches.

The River Tweed, to the east, and the Gala Water are part of the River Tweed Special Area of Conservation, a wildlife site of international importance.

The Galashiels Conservation Area takes in Bank Street, High Street, Overhaugh Street, Bridge Street and Channel Street along with a number of linking streets. The majority of the main streets run along the valley bed, northwest to southeast. The most important visual focal points are the Bank Street Gardens and around the Cornmill Square.

Galashiels is the main shopping centre in the Scottish Borders, aided by recent retail developments. The impact of these upon the town centre must continue to be monitored. The Core Activity Area (previously known as Prime Retail Frontage) has been reduced in order to promote opportunities for complementary uses within the town centre.

The arrival of the new railway station at Ladhope Vale and Transport Interchange at Stirling Street should increase vibrancy and footfall in the town centre and the Inner Relief Road scheme will ease traffic congestion and flow.

The Plan takes forward redevelopment sites within Galashiels.

There are currently significant issues with primary schools in Galashiels. A review of the catchment is underway with a view to some significant redevelopment of the school portfolio. The identification of a site for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural needs may also be required.

The Galashiels Flood Protection scheme is being delivered to protect the town from flooding from the Gala Water. Works are being undertaken at the Wilderhaugh /Plumtree area of the town to protect the town centre to a level of 1 in 75 return period (based on 2011 data). More significant works are being undertaken at Netherdale adjacent to the watercourse to project the area to a level of 1 in 200 plus climate change (based on 2011 data). This work will significantly improve the overall protection of the town allowing future development opportunities.

The Plan identifies land at Hollybush Valley, to the south west of the settlement, for potential longer term mixed use development. This area will be subject to further assessment and review as part of the next Local Development Plan review, and will require a Masterplan to ensure a coherent and holistic approach.

The area at Easter Langlee Mains is currently not appropriate for longer term development, but can be reconsidered in future Local Development Plan reviews depending on the development of waste disposal and recycling related facilities in the surrounding area. Easter Langlee is identified as a key waste management site for the whole of the Scottish Borders, with the existing landfill and waste management operations. The Council is taking forward the delivery of a waste treatment plant for the region to divert the majority of collected domestic and commercial waste away from landfill. This will result in significantly less waste being disposed of in the existing Easter Langlee Landfill site, subsequently elongating the possible lifespan of the landfill site. This development will also create renewable energy from waste derived fuel, with the possibility of a district heating scheme to provide heat to neighbouring households and businesses.

Development to the east of the Development Boundary from Boleside Road to Melrose Road will be resisted, where it has a significant effect on the River Tweed international nature conservation site. Development on the hills and woodlands north of the Development Boundary from Ladhope Crescent to Broom Drive will be resisted if it will impact on the setting of the town.

There are 10 areas, including Bank Street Gardens, Gala Park, Victoria Park and sports fields and allotments, identified as key greenspaces.

INFRASTRUCTURE CONSIDERATIONS

Affordable Housing will require to be provided under the provisions of Policy HD1 and the Supplementary Guidance/ Supplementary Planning Guidance on Affordable Housing.

The Director of Education and Lifelong Learning is in the process of undertaking a review of the Galashiels schools catchment with a view to some significant redevelopment of the school portfolio in the area. Contributions are sought towards the costs of extending or improving schools, or where deemed necessary to provide new schools, in order to ensure that over-capacity issues are managed and no reduction in standards occur.

This settlement is identified within the Council's Flood Contingency Plan as being at risk of flooding. Any development proposals should therefore be subject to early consultation with the Council's Flood and Coastal Management Officer, and SEPA, having regard to the Indicative River and Coastal Flood Map (Scotland). A flood risk assessment may be required and may influence the scale and layout of any development at a particular location.

There is current pressure on the Primary Healthcare accommodation at Roxburgh Street, Galashiels. The reprovisioning process for this is currently underway.

Galashiels falls within an area identified for a contribution to the Borders Railway (See Policy IS3).

In accordance with the Council’s Local Transport Strategy, a Central Borders Traffic Model has been developed which will help direct funding to areas of the road network that may become congested in the future. Developer contributions will be sought from developments within the Central Borders in accordance with the Supplementary Guidance/ Supplementary Planning Guidance on Developer Contributions.

With regards to Waste Water Treatment Works, Galashiels has limited capacity. Contributions may be required where upgrades are necessary. In respect of the local water network, developers may be required to contribute towards upgrading to enable development.

Further information is available from Supplementary Guidance/ Supplementary Planning Guidance on Developer Contributions and Planning/Development Briefs where applicable.

DEVELOPMENT AND SAFEGUARDING PROPOSALS

HOUSING

SITE REFERENCE	SITE NAME	SITE SIZE (HA)	INDICATIVE SITE CAPACITY
EGL13B	Crotchetknowe	12.7	75
Site Requirements			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refer to approved Planning Brief. 			
EGL16B	South Crotchetknowe	1.4	14
Site Requirements			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vehicular access from B6374 (Melrose Road) to the north Existing trees to be retained where possible. Construction works and development to be a minimum of 15 metres from the base of mature trees. Existing boundary wall feature to be retained where possible Amenity of neighbouring residential properties must be safeguarded Pedestrian link to be provided to Glenfield Road East It is intended that a Planning Brief in the form of Supplementary Guidance will be produced for this site. 			
EGL17B	Buckholm Corner	4.4	60
Site Requirements			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refer to approved Planning Brief. Consider the potential for culvert removal and channel restoration. 			
EGL19B	Mossilee	3.9	120
Site Requirements			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vehicular and pedestrian linkage with development to the east at Riddle Dumble Park / Meigle View Layout and design should minimise visual impact from the open countryside Existing trees on northern and western boundaries of site to be retained and protected Archaeological interests require to be investigated and mitigation measures may thereafter be required. It is likely a watching brief will be required during development. Consider the potential for culvert removal and channel restoration. 			

EGL20B	Grange	0.9	13
Site Requirements			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing trees protected by Tree Preservation Order must be retained Preferred vehicular access off Craigpark Gardens Amenity of existing neighbouring residential properties must be safeguarded. 			
EGL32B	Ryehaugh	2.6	10
Site Requirements			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing trees/vegetation to be retained where required. A Tree Preservation Order covers the site Mitigation measures are required to prevent any impact on the River Tweed SAC/SSSI Archaeological interests require to be investigated and mitigation measures may thereafter be required Access onto A7 to be within vicinity of existing access with relevant upgrades Development of site must provide access to EGL200. 			
EGL41	Buckholm North	8.7	180
Site Requirements			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refer to approved Planning Brief. Consider the potential for culvert removal and channel restoration. 			
EGL42	Forest Hill	2.5	50
Site Requirements			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refer to approved Planning Brief. 			
EGL43	Balmoral Avenue	0.5	10
Site Requirements			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Landscape buffer to the north, south and west to minimise visual impact from the open countryside Access from Balmoral Avenue to east Existing trees to east are protected by a Tree Preservation Order. This must be given due consideration in provision of access. 			
EGL200	North Ryehaugh	1.7	20
Site Requirements			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to be provided through adjoining site to south (EGL32B). Access immediately from the A7 will not be appropriate Appropriate structure planting to be provided Mitigation measures are required to prevent any impact on the River Tweed SAC/SSSI Existing trees/vegetation to be retained where required. A Tree Preservation Order covers the site. 			
AGALA017	Coopersknowe Phase 4	2.1	50
Site Requirements			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New vehicular access road from the north Retention of the mature tree on the eastern boundary of the site Provision of a SUDS feature Landscape planting in an open space to the south west and in the SUDS area Long term maintenance of landscaped areas to be addressed. 			

AGALA024	Easter Langlee Expansion Area	25.2	450
Site Requirements			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refer to approved Planning Brief and Masterplan for the site as well as the existing planning permission. 			

BUSINESS AND INDUSTRIAL

SITE REFERENCE	SITE NAME	SITE SIZE (HA)	INDICATIVE SITE CAPACITY
BGALA002	Galafoot	2.6	N/A
Site Requirements			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is a district business and industrial site as defined in Policy ED1. Vehicular access onto the site from the road to the east Development should conserve and enhance the natural heritage interest of the Gala Water, to the north, part of the Tweed Special Area of Conservation Potential contamination from the former gas works should be investigated and mitigated Any implications in respect of the consultation zone associated with the Dewarton/Selkirk major accident hazard pipeline must be assessed A flood risk assessment is required for the site The tree belt to the west of the site should be retained and managed as it screens the site from the playing fields. Where possible trees should be planted and maintained along the north of the site to screen it from the minor road and pathway. 			

BUSINESS AND INDUSTRIAL SAFEGUARDING

SITE REFERENCE	SITE NAME	SITE SIZE (HA)	INDICATIVE SITE CAPACITY
zEL38	Easter Langlee Industrial Estate	2.0	N/A
Site Requirements			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is a district safeguarded business and industrial site as defined in Policy ED1. 			
zEL40	Netherdale Industrial Estate	6.7	N/A
Site Requirements			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is a district safeguarded business and industrial site as defined in Policy ED1 Refer to approved Planning Brief. In the event of further proposed development or redevelopment, a flood risk assessment is required. 			
zEL41	Huddersfield Street Mill	3.4	N/A
Site Requirements			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is a district safeguarded business and industrial site as defined in Policy ED1. In the event of further proposed development or redevelopment, a flood risk assessment is required. 			

zEL42	Wheatlands Road	5.6	N/A
Site Requirements			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is a district safeguarded business and industrial site as defined in Policy ED1 • In the event of further proposed development or redevelopment, a flood risk assessment is required. 			
BGALA003	Langhaugh Business and Industrial Safeguarding	0.9	N/A
Site Requirements			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is a district business and industrial safeguarded site as defined in Policy ED1 • In the event of further proposed development or redevelopment, a flood risk assessment is required. 			

MIXED USE

SITE REFERENCE	SITE NAME	SITE SIZE (HA)	INDICATIVE SITE CAPACITY
MGALA002	South of Coopersknowe	1.2	N/A
Site Requirements			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New vehicular access road from the housing site to the north or the employment land to the west • The south eastern part of the site will be required for a new roundabout at the junction of Melrose Road and the Langshaw road. • Retention of mature trees and replacement planting along the Melrose Road and western boundary • Potential contaminated land from agricultural activity should be investigated and mitigated • Long term maintenance of landscaped areas to be addressed. 			
MGALA003	Winston Road	0.7	N/A
Site Requirements			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vehicular access to the site from Winston Road • Creation of good quality building elevations along the Winston Road and Melrose Road elevations • Screen the site from the adjacent electricity substation and abattoir to the south with tree/hedge planting • Long term maintenance landscaped areas to be addressed. 			

POTENTIAL LONGER TERM MIXED USE (SUBJECT TO REVIEW)

SITE REFERENCE	SITE NAME	SITE SIZE (HA)	INDICATIVE SITE CAPACITY
SGALA005 and SGALA016	Hollybush Valley	73.5	N/A
Site Requirements			
<p>The Hollybush areas will be subject to further assessment and will require a Masterplan to ensure a coherent and holistic approach to allow their future consideration. The site would form part of a new district for the settlement as it is separated from it by the Gala Hill woodland. High quality design is required to create its own identity. The following requirements will need to be met within the Masterplan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identified as preferred longer term development area subject to a transport appraisal and major roads issues to be addressed including: new road through the Policies on Balmoral Avenue side; subsidiary access through Balmoral Avenue; upgrade of Hollybush Road through Gala Hill; upgrade of Hollybush Road on southern side of Gala Hill; and upgrade of Yair Junction onto A7 • Residential, employment and community uses would be appropriate in this area • A flood risk assessment may be required because a small area in the east of the Hollybush site is in a flood risk area • Conservation and management of existing woodland adjacent to and in the area. These include the Gala Policies, Gala Hill, Stannis Plantation and copses in the west of the Hollybush area. Conserve hedges and field trees. Create single trees in the south and west of Hollybush to enhance these areas • New woodland structure planting to the west of Mossilee West and to the south, west and east of Hollybush to contain the area. Open space on the steeper slopes in the north of Hollybush • Conserve existing wetland areas in the south west of Hollybush and create Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SUDS) there and in the north • Archaeological Sites and Monuments Record sites should be evaluated and mitigated. These include the Picts Work Ditch/Catrail on the west of Hollybush; a well to the west of Hollybush and an old road running east to west. These should be excluded from development • Retain the Southern Upland Way pathway through Hollybush and create new circular countryside paths around the site • Long term maintenance of landscaped areas to be addressed • Ecological survey to be undertaken and appropriate mitigation measures recommended • An open space and outdoor recreational strategy for the area. 			

REDEVELOPMENT

SITE REFERENCE	SITE NAME	SITE SIZE (HA)	INDICATIVE SITE CAPACITY
zR04	Plumtreehall Brae	1.8	N/A
Site Requirements			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements to access to the A7 required • Flood risk assessment may be required. 			

zR06	Roxburgh Street	1.4	N/A
Site Requirements			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A flood risk assessment is required and design and layout of the site should mitigate flood risk on the site • Archaeological interests require to be investigated and mitigation measures may thereafter be required • The Category B Listed former Glasite Chapel and Botany Mill and Category C Listed Morrison and Murray Engineering Works and their setting must be protected and retained. Any extensions, alterations, new building and associated landscaping should be designed sympathetically to this setting • The layout and design of the site should be sympathetic to and integrate well with the character of the Conservation Area, which covers the northern section of the site. 			
zR024	Heriot-Watt Halls of Residence	3.2	N/A
Site Requirements			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Majority of site redeveloped for student accommodation, although remainder of site remains suitable for redevelopment • Existing access off Tweed Road to serve remainder of site • Existing trees within site to be retained where possible • Amenity of existing residential properties to be safeguarded. 			
zR0202	Melrose Road	2.1	N/A
Site Requirements			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to approved Planning Brief. 			
RGALA001	St Aidans Church	0.2	N/A
Site Requirements			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The redevelopment of the site should retain the Category B Listed St Aidans Church and the Category B Listed St Aidans Hall if possible. Any new buildings should conserve and enhance the character of these Listed buildings and views from the proposed Galashiels Conservation Area at Bank Street. • Flood risk assessment may be required. 			
RGALA002	Vacant buildings at Kirk Brae	0.1	N/A
Site Requirements			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment of any impact on nature conservation will be required • The character and setting of the C Listed Buildings which occupy the site must be protected and retained. Any extension, alterations, new building and associated landscaping should be designed sympathetically to this character and setting • Parking requirements must be met within the site • It is expected that the buildings will be put back into residential use. 			

RGALA003	Old Refuse Tip	1.1	N/A
Site Requirements			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to the nature of existing adjoining uses, it is not considered that this site could be developed for residential purposes • Flood risk assessment may be required • Mitigation measures are required to prevent any impact on the River Tweed SAC/SSSI • Contamination assessment required and appropriate mitigation measures to be carried out thereafter • Vehicular access to be via the junction serving the adjacent Abattoir site to the north. The junction will require to be upgraded • A short length of footway will be required in Winston Road to help define the junction, to connect with the 'Black Path' and to allow a suitable pedestrian crossing point to link with the footway on the west side of Winston Road • Gas pipeline exists within eastern boundary of the site • There is moderate biodiversity risk associated with the site which must be given due consideration • Structure planting along northern and southern boundary • Protected species interests may be present within the structures and further assessment on nature conservation will be required • Existing overhead power lines will have implications for any development • The Southern Upland Way runs adjacent to the southern edge of the site. 			
RGALA004	Bylands	0.2	N/A
Site Requirements			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site suitable for residential development • Vehicular access via Manse Street • Existing feature boundary wall to be retained where possible • Archaeological interests require to be investigated and mitigation measures may thereafter be required. 			
zCR2	Huddersfield Street/Hill Street	1.1	N/A
Site Requirements			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to approved Planning Brief. 			
zCR3	Stirling Street	0.7	N/A
Site Requirements			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to approved Planning Brief. 			

TRANSPORTATION

SITE REFERENCE	SITE NAME	SITE SIZE (HA)	INDICATIVE SITE CAPACITY
zT11	Galashiels Transport Interchange	0.7	N/A
Site Requirements			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refer to approved Planning Brief. 			
zRS2	Galashiels Railway Station	0.2	N/A
Site Requirements			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parking provision at site of existing bus station Vehicular drop off point to be provided within site. 			

EDUCATION

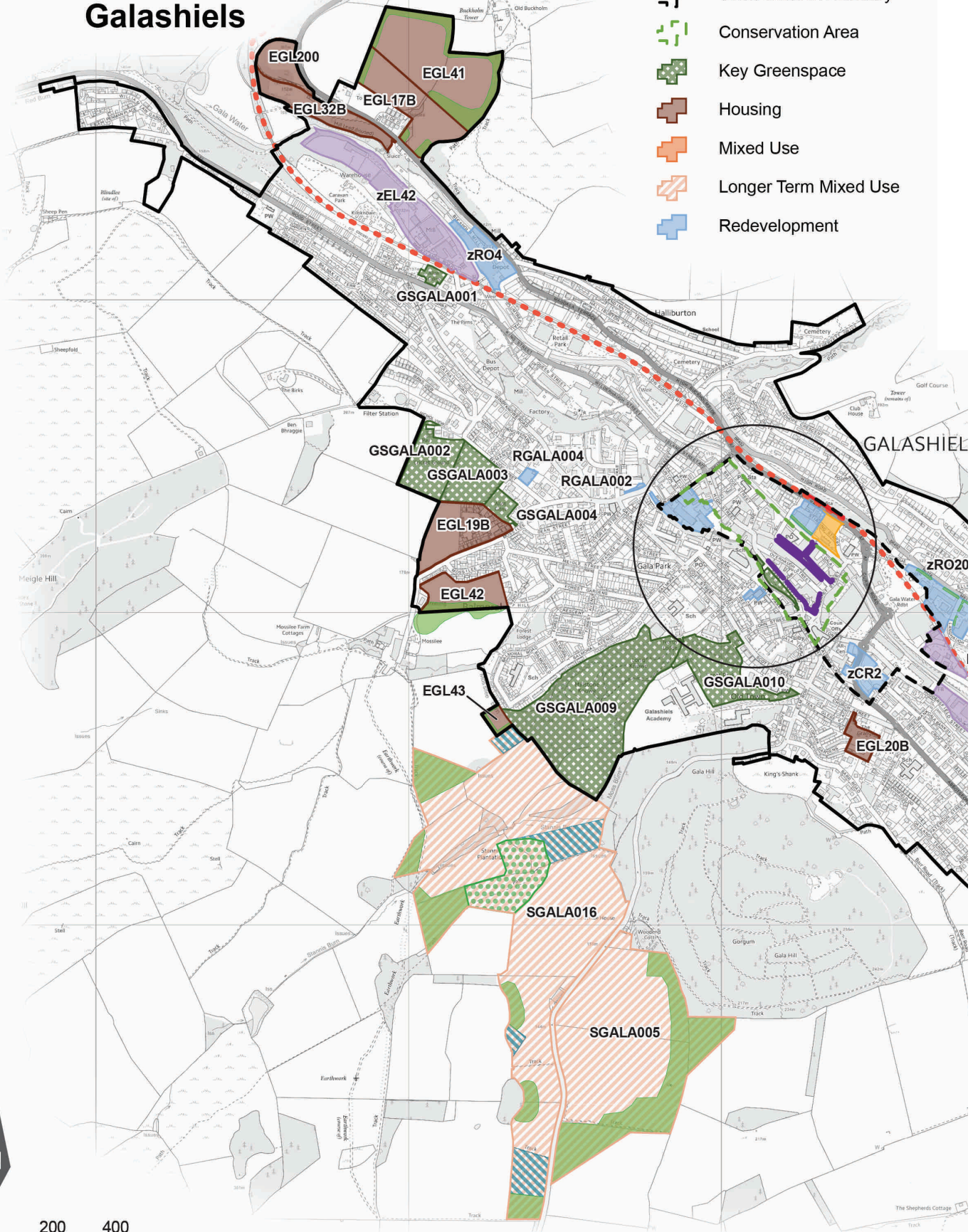
SITE REFERENCE	SITE NAME	SITE SIZE (HA)	INDICATIVE SITE CAPACITY
zED2	Heriot Watt University - Netherdale Campus	2.7	N/A
Site Requirements			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is an education safeguarded site as defined in Policy IS17. In the event of further proposed development or redevelopment, a flood risk assessment is required. 			

KEY GREENSPACE

SITE REFERENCE	SITE NAME	SITE SIZE (HA)
GSGALA001	Wood St. Allotment	0.3
GSGALA002	Manse Road Cricket Ground	2.8
GSGALA003	Manse Road Park	2.6
GSGALA004	Mossillee Allotment	0.6
GSGALA005	Public Park	2.7
GSGALA006	Tweed Road	6.6
GSGALA007	Galashiels RFC	3.3
GSGALA008	Bank Street Gardens	0.4
GSGALA009	Gala Policies	13.4
GSGALA010	Scott Park	3.8











Scottish Borders Council
Local Development Plan 2016
Galashiels

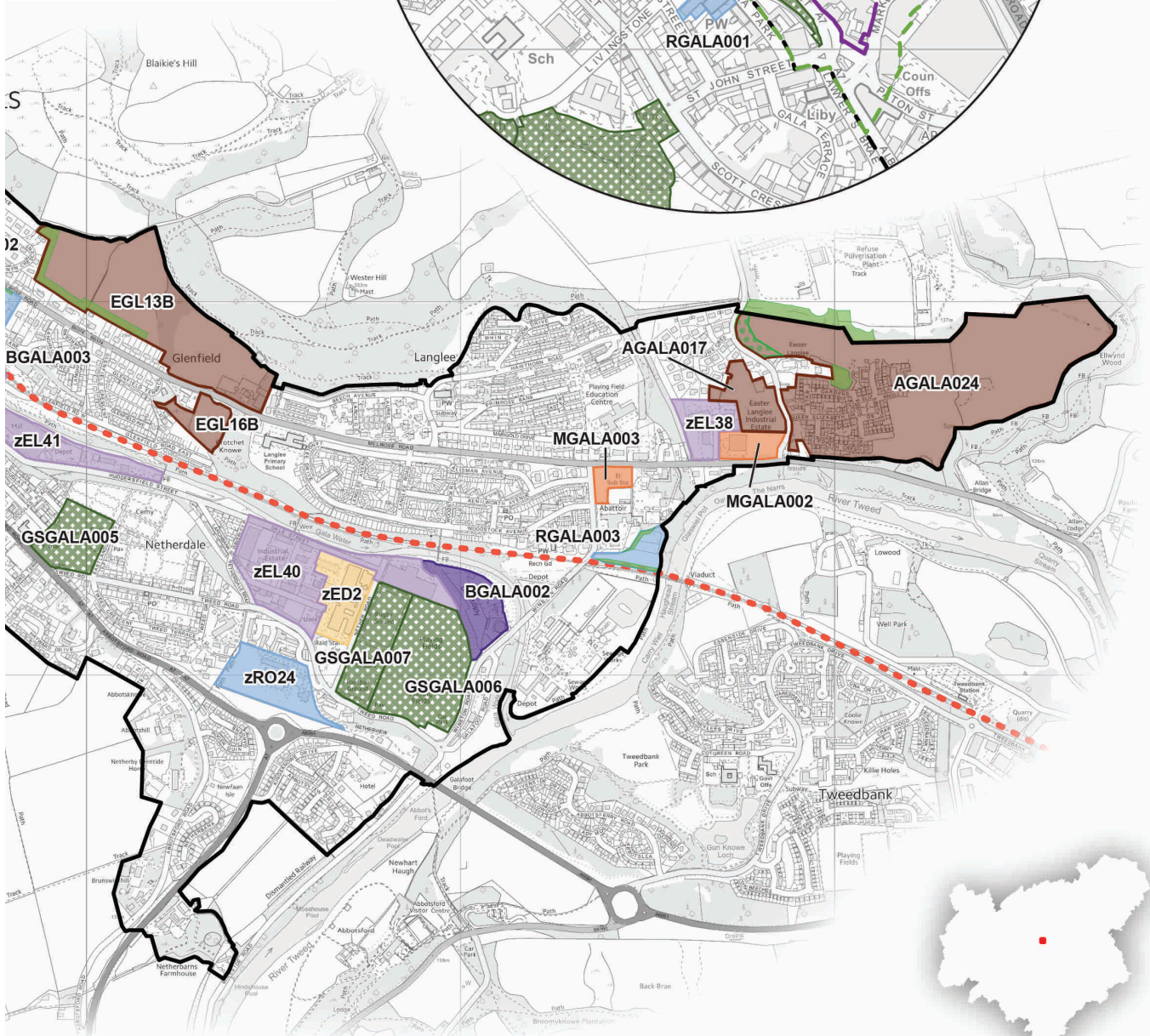
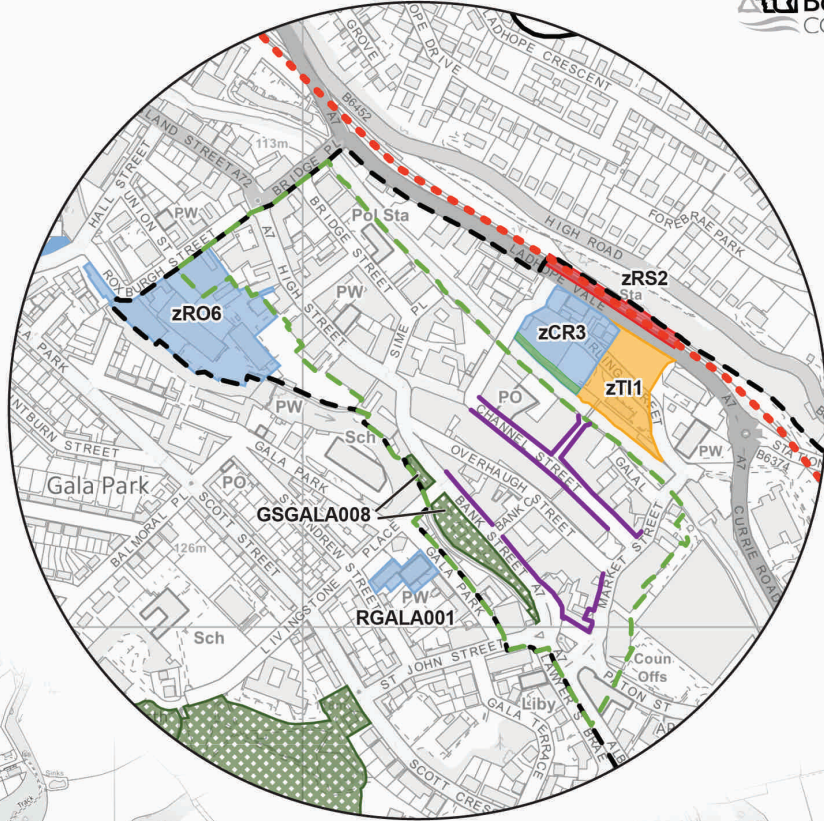
-  Development Boundary
-  Town Centre Boundary
-  Conservation Area
-  Key Greenspace
-  Housing
-  Mixed Use
-  Longer Term Mixed Use
-  Redevelopment



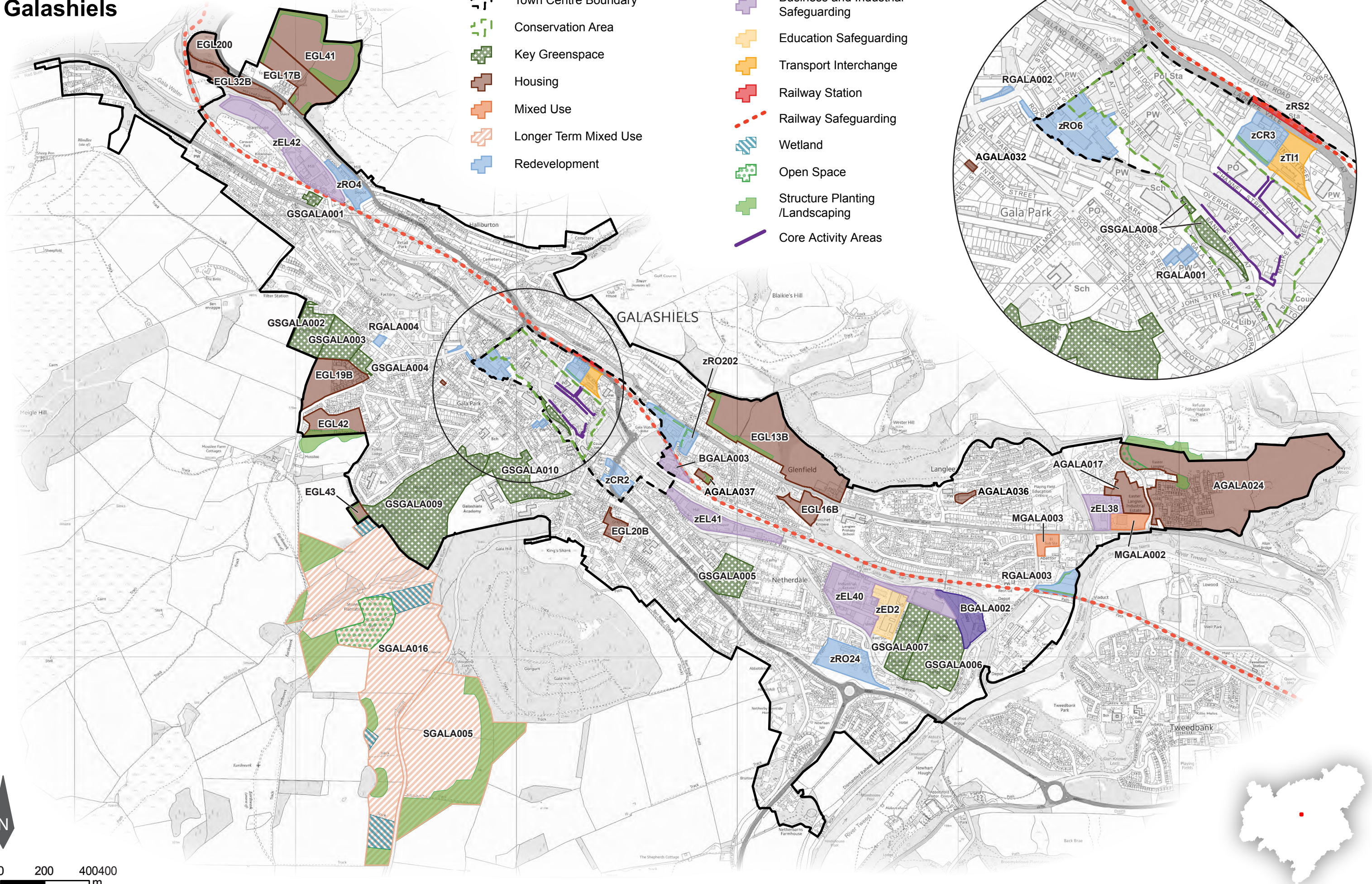
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Town Centre Inset

-  Business and Industrial
-  Business and Industrial Safeguarding
-  Education Safeguarding
-  Transport Interchange
-  Railway Station
-  Railway Safeguarding
-  Wetland
-  Open Space
-  Structure Planting /Landscaping
-  Core Activity Areas



Scottish Borders Council Local Development Plan 2016 as modified by Supplementary Guidance on Housing 2017
Galashiels



- Development Boundary
- Town Centre Boundary
- Conservation Area
- Key Greenspace
- Housing
- Mixed Use
- Longer Term Mixed Use
- Redevelopment
- Business and Industrial
- Business and Industrial Safeguarding
- Education Safeguarding
- Transport Interchange
- Railway Station
- Railway Safeguarding
- Wetland
- Open Space
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- Core Activity Areas

Town Centre Inset

