



# Leitholm, Eccles and Birgham Community Led Plan 2023 - 2033

Produced by Leitholm, Eccles and Birgham Community Council

20/01/2025



## Foreword

I have pleasure in introducing your Community Led Plan for the Leitholm, Eccles and Birgham Community Council area. The Plan has been created following a process of consultations across our area including community meetings, a questionnaire and discussions in the street. It is a set of aspirations and things we would want to do / have done in the future.

### Now What?

The writing of plans is a pastime as old as time itself. Many are consigned to a shelf unopened and unread. For your Plan to be more than a 'winter pastime' we need to make sure it is and continues to be a living document.

Your Plan will be lodged with the Scottish Borders Council as a means of influencing future strategies. As a standalone document it is unlikely to have an impact, but taken alongside the Plans of other communities it should have an influence.

The main purpose of the Plan is to provide us, your Community Council, with a mandate to lobby the Scottish Borders Council and other public bodies to get things done on your behalf.

In the current financial climate, where all public services in Scotland have suffered year on year reductions in budgets, this can be a tough task and one which needs to be approached with a reality check. Tasks which we may have expected to be addressed in weeks or months ten years ago will now take much longer. Some will not be addressed at all. In this climate we will need to be realistic with regard to our targets and innovative as to how we achieve them. We need to look beyond our public servants to advance - looking beyond will become a regular means of achieving success.

John F Kennedy comes to mind, in his inaugural speech he said, 'Ask not what your country can do for you – ask what you can do for your country'. On a more local level this rings true for our community. Doing things for ourselves is not new: we have been cutting grass, planting borders, managing our halls and much more for years. This will need to continue. Partnership working with local businesses and seeking funding from grant-giving bodies will also form part of our means of delivering your Community Led Plan.

At this time we have the challenges and opportunities of Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) being created in the vicinity of Eccles Substation. Our challenges include mitigating the impact of these developments on those who live closest to

them and limiting proliferation on our prime arable land. The opportunities are in the potential for community benefits from those developments which do proceed which will assist in delivering some of the Plan. To take full advantage of such opportunities we need to have a clear view of your wishes and aspirations. As your Community Council we will look to the Plan to guide our work. We will continue to consult with you and we will keep you informed.

### **Acknowledgements**

I highly commend the excellent work carried out by Anne Wales and her team, Fiona McCall, Helen Anco and Julie Jackson in delivering this Place Plan against the complex criteria set by the Scottish government. My thanks also goes to Beth Landon for her wise guidance and support and to all members of our community who have provided input.

### **Endorsement**

The plan was unanimously endorsed by Leitholm, Eccles and Birgham Community Council at our meeting on Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> September 2024. Once the plan has been registered with the Scottish Borders Council, our work will continue through delivery, consultation, review and updating.

**Bob Hope, Chair**

## **Our Vision**

**To promote a vibrant, friendly, supportive and sustainable community, which is well connected, healthy and safe. To retain and protect the rural and environmental benefits of the area.**

**A place we are proud to live.**

## **Our 7 Community Outcomes**

**Connectivity  
Inclusivity  
Sustainability  
Health and Wellbeing  
Pride of Place  
Rural Environment  
Tourism and Heritage**

## Contents

	<b>page</b>
<a href="#">Section 1 : Introduction</a>	6
Boundary Map	7
<a href="#">Section 2 : Context of Area</a>	8
Leitholm	
Eccles	11
Birgham	13
<a href="#">Section 3 : National and Local Planning Context</a>	16
<a href="#">Section 4 : Community Engagement</a>	18
Place Plan Diagrams	19
<a href="#">Section 5 : Results of Engagement</a>	21
5.1 Assets, Opportunities, Needs and Challenges	
5.2 Vision	23
5.3 Community Aims and Objectives	
5.4 Use and Development of Land and buildings	24
<a href="#">Section 6 : Proposals/ Community Outcomes</a>	26
Outcome 1 : Connectivity	
Outcome 2 : Inclusivity	28
Outcome 3 : Sustainability	30
Outcome 4 : Health and Wellbeing	31
Outcome 5 : Pride of Place	33
Outcome 6 : Rural Environment	34
Outcome 7 : Tourism and Heritage	
<a href="#">Appendix 1 : Place Plan Questionnaire Analysis</a>	34
<a href="#">Appendix 2 : Community Consultation Summer 2024</a>	41
<a href="#">Appendix 3 : Maps showing use of land and buildings</a>	44
<a href="#">Appendix 4 : Information Notices</a>	50

## Section 1 : Introduction

Local Place Plans were introduced by the Planning Scotland Act, 2019 which contains a new right for Communities to produce their own plans as part of the Scottish Planning system. Place Plans are a way for communities to achieve change in their local area. They provide an opportunity for local communities to think about how to make their “place” better, agree priorities, and take action (often working with others) to make change happen. Community-led place plans are more than just a plan: they can help your community understand what it wants to be like in the future. Having a plan and working together with Scottish Borders Council and others, we can make positive change happen.

This plan has been produced by Leitholm, Eccles and Birgham Community Council working in partnership with Birgham Community Development Trust, Leitholm Village Hall Committee and the Friends of Leitholm (1) and in consultation with those who live and work in the area. (see Section 4 Community Engagement).

The relevant Scottish Borders Councillors have been consulted and there has been ongoing communication with the Community Engagement Officer and the Capacity Building Lead (Borders Community Action) for Community Led Planning in Berwickshire and Cheviot. The plan meets the legal requirements for Local Place Plans. (2) (see Appendix 4 for submission checklist and information notice)

The plan relates to the three villages of Leitholm, Eccles and Birgham and surrounding rural areas which are identified on the boundary map below (see p. 7). The National Census Scotland identifies the areas as ‘accessible rural’. They fall within the UK parliamentary constituency of Berwickshire, Roxburgh and Selkirk, the Scottish parliamentary constituency of Etrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire, the Scottish Borders council area, the ward of mid Berwickshire and the parish of Eccles.

The plan relates to proposed and existing shared concerns and activities whilst retaining each village’s sense of identity and place. (See Section 5 Results of Engagement)

- 1. The aim is to create one committee in Leitholm which will apply to give the hall charitable status and which may take the form of a Community Development Trust**
- 2. As identified by the Planning (Scotland Act (2019), the Town and Country Planning (Local Place Plans) (Scotland) Regulations (2021) and the Planning Circular 1/2022: Local Place Plans**

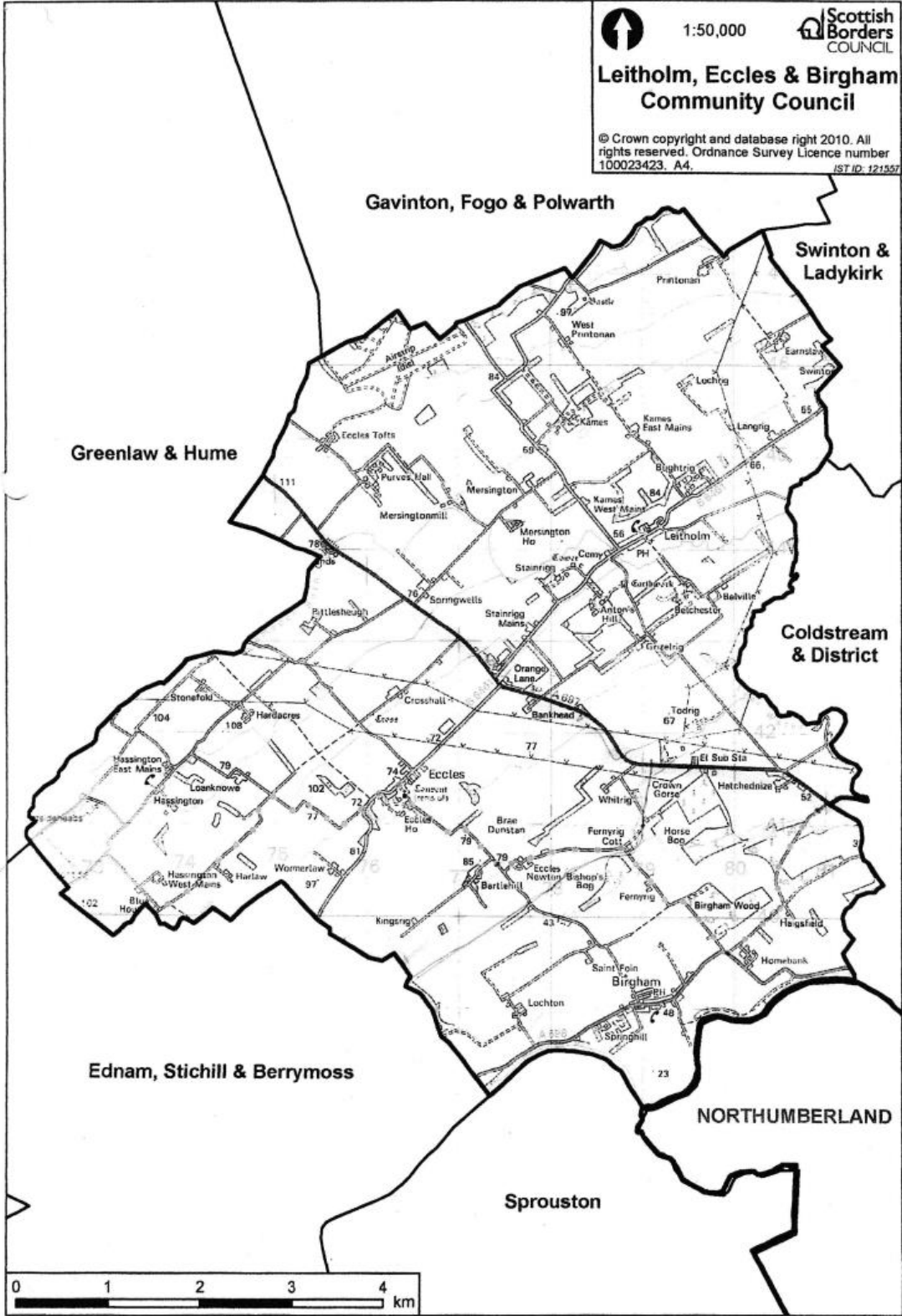


1:50,000



### Leitholm, Eccles & Birgham Community Council

© Crown copyright and database right 2010. All rights reserved. Ordnance Survey Licence number 100023423. A4. IST ID: 121597





## Section 2 : Context of the Area

### Leitholm and outskirts

Population – Leitholm has a population of 232 people, according to the Local Development Plan dated 2023. Of this amount, the wee village of Leitholm itself has approximately half, the rest being in the outskirts, with Printonan and Charterhall to the North, Orange Lane and Todrig to the South, Eccles Tofts and Mersington to the West and Earnslaw and Swinton Mill to the East.

Housing – Leitholm village housing is primarily old stock two storey houses and single storey crofts. At least four of the buildings have listed status. On the site of the old school are modern purpose-built bungalows primarily for the elderly and Berwickshire Housing Association have four bungalows for social care. There is one small social housing estate at the East end of the village and four more houses for social care along Main Street. One purpose built house is energy self sufficient with a design that captures heat and keeps it in the very well insulated building.

The outskirts of Leitholm have six large estates built around grand houses, namely Purves hall, Kames, Bughtrig, Belchester, Anton's Hill and Stainrigg.

Education - Leitholm has a Play Park but no longer has a school. Children take school transport to either Swinton, Kelso, Duns or Ednam. However the Village hall runs several classes for adults and children alike in creative crafts and indoor sports.

History – a wealth of detailed information about Leitholm village and area, exists in the form of a booklet readily available to residents and visitors. Some notable features within the village include, Leitholm Mill, the Public House & Inn, the Kirk, the Village Hall, a peaceful cemetery, and a memorial Cross which has strong links to the Ramsay family, with a museum dedicated to Sir Admiral Ramsay situated at the East end of the village. Notable historic attributes around Leitholm include an Iron Age Hill Fort, a ruined Peel tower, Stainrigg Well, Mersington Mill and Printonan Bastle ruins. Once a year the village celebrates the Reivers history.

Healthcare – residents of Leitholm village and outskirts travel to Coldstream or Kelso Medical Centres or Melrose Borders General Hospital for healthcare. Our local shopping town Coldstream has an excellent pharmacy. Transport to our local towns, including Berwick is limited by a very restricted Public Transport system.

Small Businesses – Leitholm village is visited regularly by several local services such as a butcher and fish monger. Coal and logs are brought to the village and we have a mobile library and bank. The local corner store in Coldstream can supply the village with postal, chemist and general store goods. The village of Leitholm also has a Thai takeaway, a Wine merchant, two



building companies, a Public house which is primarily a B&B, a Wedding specialist, Upholsterer, a Campervan workshop and skilled crafters.

Voluntary team – volunteers keep grassed spaces and pathways trimmed, plant flowers, litter pick, organise the Kirk events and organise the village hall classes and events.

Environment - Leitholm village is surrounded by very productive arable and livestock fields. Some fields have SSSI status due to evidence of mediaeval occupation. The rolling landscape indicates the Drumlin glacial deposits, now cut through in places by the various burns and the River Leet. Owing to the geology and especially the clay layers, Leitholm has several recognised, permanent springs and ephemeral pools. Flood plains surround the village and such fields slow water through reed beds along the River Leet valley. Wildlife seen along the watercourses include Otter, Kingfishers, Heron and Dipper, with a variety of deer, and foxes too. Sparrow Hawks, Tawny Owls, Buzzard, Great Spotted Wood Peckers and Barn Owls are frequently seen or heard in the mature trees and Oyster Catchers feed on the fields. Red Starts and Spotted Flycatchers are often seen in the shelter belts. Small birds such as Tree Creepers and the Nut Hatch can be seen on the Oak Strip pathway as well as in the village gardens.

Within the village an old garage site is now recognised as a Brownfield Habitat with 70 plus species of wildflower / grasses and over 40 species of moths and incidental insects. A study was undertaken of the site by the village community and a bench donated so everyone could sit, watch, listen and appreciate the biodiversity on what was once thought of as wasteland.



## Eccles and surrounding area

**Population** – Eccles, including Hassington, Kennelsideheads and rural homes, according to the latest report received (2023) has 63 homes and a population of 126.

**Housing** – The village of Eccles has a mix of housing. Original estate cottages, built in the late 19th Century, built of stone. Some have been extended upwards and other retain their original single story with wonderfully high ceilings, conservatories have been added to a number. Larger stone houses stand proudly throughout the village, also built decades ago. A newer development of housing proudly sits in a cul-de-sac. Converted and modernised original council houses are now private homes and individual homes have been built close by. The estate stables has been tastefully converted into a private home as has a tower and linked building.

**Education** – The primary school was closed some years ago and the building is currently for sale. There are very few school-age children in the village and those who reside attend or may attend schools in Ednam, Swinton, Duns or Kelso.

**History** – it is believed that Eccles has a number of historical stories. Buildings with a heritage significance include the church/cemetery, the now closed village hall that was originally a free church and the remains of a convent. A small group of residents will explore these and search for evidence of historical events and significance later this year. If there is sufficient the plan is to both record the findings and perhaps compile a booklet which would be made available to those living in the village and the area.

**Healthcare** – Medical Centres in Duns, Coldstream and Kelso provide support to residents. The pharmacies in these towns further support supplies prescribed as well as over-the-counter medications, supplements and other supplies. Borders General Hospital is the local and regional hospital where referrals are made for additional care (outpatient and inpatient) as well as an Accident & Emergency Department. Individuals requiring medical support not available in the region are referred to Edinburgh or Glasgow hospitals. Local community hospitals in Duns and Kelso have recently won the battle to stay 'open' and provide the opportunity for people to be transferred from the regional hospital or one of the city hospitals when they are still in need of medical care but no longer require the more complex support in the larger facilities.

Support is required for residents with immediate and/or long-term care in their own homes. Carers and PAs attend following a Social Work assessment but the challenges of recruiting carers is a major difficulty in the whole of Scotland and is especially difficult in rural areas. Many people are cared for by only unpaid carers (family and friends) and there is a lack of respite facilities in the area.

**Businesses** – businesses located in the village – Olivers Transport Services Ltd which offers warehousing, haulage, HGV repairs and services, also Knots & Barley Ltd which specialises in carpentry and joinery projects. And G&J Waddle, Joiners. In addition, there are individuals who offer specialist services and a number of people now work 'at home' and are employed by organisations locally and further afield.

**Environment** – residents maintain neat and natural gardens. Hedgerows are maintained by owners or, where relevant, the local Council. A volunteer maintains a number of grass verges and plots. A privately owned field is located in the centre of the village and this is kept tidy by either the individuals leasing it or by the owner when not rented. An unused area of grass is located close to the busy double- bend and this is the responsibility of the owner to keep tidy.

**Facilities** – the village has, through time, lost its Post Office as well as the mobile service, its little shop and its village hall. The small number of residents has resulted in these not being economically viable and they closed as people have retired. The lovely old church is also closed primarily due to the lack of ministers. The majority of residents in Eccles enjoy living in a small, quiet village but there is an awareness it can be difficult to attract new people when the facilities are lacking.

## Birgham and surrounding area

Birgham is located near the River Tweed on the A698 between Coldstream and Kelso. The area covered by the Scottish National Census includes Birgham village, Fernyrigg and the rural area to the north and west, Birgham, Litkeltern and Mayfield woods and the rural area between Birgham and Carham to the south in Northumberland.

**Population** - The population consists mainly of older workers and retirees. However, it should be noted that there are a number of younger families in the village as well as visiting grandchildren. The population is of higher socio-economic status than the national average. The population is less ethnically diverse than the UK average.

**Housing** –Birgham contains a number of older terraced stone cottages at each end of the village, reflecting its history as two smaller hamlets. It is largely a ribbon development with detached properties built in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century forming a large part of the village. There is a small development of semi- detached properties built in the 1950s, (originally as farm workers cottages,) at Treaty Park. Newer properties developed in the last decade can be found mainly at East Haugh (large detached and bungalows) , with a couple of large detached houses at the west end of the village. Census data indicates that a substantial number of properties in Birgham are 1 or 2 person households. There is a lack of housing developed specifically for older age groups.



**Education** – There are no schools in Birgham, with the school located in what is now the Village Hall having closed in the 1950s. The nearest primary schools are in Coldstream, Sprouston and Ednam and the nearest secondary schools are Kelso High School and Berwickshire High School in Chirnside. Lifelong learning and extra- curricular activities are afforded by the various clubs, societies and activities which take place mainly in the Village Hall. There is a lack of provision of this type specifically for young people but the play park, including the recently installed pavilion and table tennis table, is well used. It is intended to undertake consultation with local schools.

**Healthcare** – As noted above, the population is of higher socio-economic status than the national average, with affluence generally being linked to good health. In 2011, 79% of the population regarded themselves as being in good or very good health. Doctors surgeries are available in Coldstream and Kelso and the nearest hospital is at Kelso. It is intended to undertake consultation with health and social care professionals to identify issues, including those caused by the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic and issues relating to care in people’s homes.

**Business and Employment** - The key business in the village is the village pub, The Fisherman’s Arms, which together with the village hall, is a key social hub in the village. There is also a Pond and Aquatics business. However, the village is largely reliant on facilities in Coldstream and Kelso, with visiting mobile services such as butchers and fishmongers. Birgham is entrepreneurial, with a larger than average number of working residents being self- employed. Working residents are employed in industries such as agriculture (including forestry and fishing), manufacturing, education, health, construction and retail.

**Environment (built and natural)** – Birgham is surrounded by arable and productive farmland and the area includes the woodlands of Birgham, Lithkelim and Mayfield. It is near to the River Tweed and its flood plains. Consequently, the natural environment is home to a variety of flora and fauna. The rural environment provides both agricultural employment opportunities as well as opportunities for leisure pursuits.



The key buildings and land in Birgham village itself are the Village Hall and the pub, as well as the play park and the cemetery. The Village Hall is a key social hub as well providing a safe, warm space for times of disruption ( eg adverse weather conditions or power cuts). The pub was a key social hub but closed in January 2024. It is a key priority for the village to find a way of restoring this as a community asset.





## Section 3: National and Local Planning Policy Context

Our Community Led Plan was developed as part of the National Planning Framework and aligns with the National Planning Framework 4 (2023) (NPF4), the Scottish Borders Local Development Plan 2 2021 – 2026 (LDP2) and the Berwickshire Locality Plan.

### **3.1 National Planning Framework 4**

Our overall Vision (see p.5) relates to the aspiration of NPF4 to create ‘sustainable, liveable and productive places’ (foreword). Our theme of connectivity resonates with the commitment to digital connectivity and transport infrastructure. Its concern for ‘Just Transition’ (to net zero) resonates with our theme of sustainability whilst at the same time acknowledging that ‘environmental quality is a key asset for rural areas’, as identified in our section on the rural environment. Other outcomes within our plan relate to the commitment in SNPF4 to local living, rural revitalisation, tourism, culture and creativity, as well as health and wellbeing.

‘Scotland’s rich heritage, culture and outstanding environment are national assets which support our economy, identity, health and wellbeing’ (p.1)

The challenges acknowledged within NPF4 are those identified in our Community Led Plan including rural living consistent with climate change in areas with limited public transport and high levels of wellbeing and quality of life but with populations with increasing numbers of older people and fewer young people. (South of Scotland Regional Priorities)

### **3.2 Scottish Borders Local Development Plan 2**

Our plan aligns also with the Scottish Borders Local Development Plan (LDP2) 2021-2026 (Adopted on 22/08/2024). LDP2 expresses commitment to digital connectivity and an improved transport infrastructure in line with our aspirations relating to connectivity. It also foregrounds sustainability/ net zero, the promotion of health and wellbeing and the protection of the natural and built environment, all of which are themes which run through our 7 community outcomes.

However, the Spatial Strategy included in LDP2 focuses on 3 key areas and on the major town centres of the Scottish Borders. There is no consideration of how smaller places such as Leitholm, Eccles and Birgham might relate to this. Elsewhere, the plan recognizes the importance of improved connectivity for economic growth. The Local Development Plan needs to make explicit how the different aspects of the plan might work together and how smaller places and not just larger towns may benefit. Another example of this would be to look at how proposals such as our aspiration for footpaths and cycle paths linking the three villages could be incorporated as part of the Active Travel initiative. (outcome 7 Tourism and Heritage)

A further omission in LDP2 is that there is no acknowledgement of the potential conflict involved in supporting renewable energy developments whilst at the same time promoting protection of the natural and built environment, as outlined in the rural environment section of our CLP. (outcome 6)

### **3.3 Berwickshire Locality Plan**

The themes of the Berwickshire Locality Plan of economy, skills and learning; health, care and wellbeing; quality of life and environment and place are reflected within the themes of our Community Led Plan.

## Section 4: Community Engagement

### 4.1 Consultation Process

The process of consultation and planning started at our meeting in Eccles on 10 August 2022. This plan reflects planning and progress since that date. The plan was created following an initial consultation with people residing in our area. A questionnaire was designed drawing on the themes of the Scottish Place Plan tool and delivered to every household in Spring 2023. The questionnaire had a 20 % response rate and the Community Led Plan was written to reflect the issues raised and the themes which emerged.

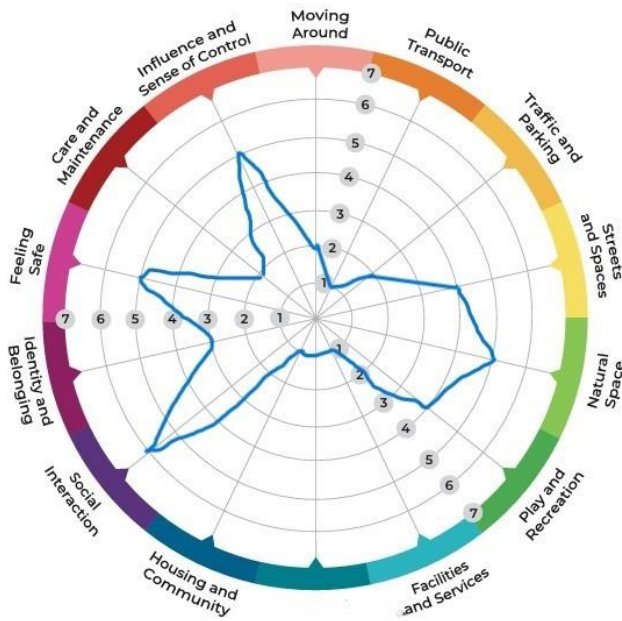
It is a living document which will be amended and updated in the light of further consultation and of changing contexts and priorities. Since the original questionnaire, consultation on the draft plan has taken place through drop- in sessions or events such as coffee mornings or cheese and wine evenings which have generally been well attended. However, it is clear that not everyone attends social events and so the process of door- to -door consultation has taken place in Leitholm and Eccles and, more recently, in Birgham. There has been extensive consultation with Birgham Community Development Trust, initially through a meeting exclusively on the topic of the Place Plan (06/09/2023) and thereafter as an agenda item at each monthly meeting. The Development Trust is in regular contact with the wider Birgham community and as such is aware of community needs and priorities. In Birgham, the Development Trust has additionally started the process of a questionnaire and door- to- door consultation specifically regarding the local pub.

### 4.2 Summary and Analysis

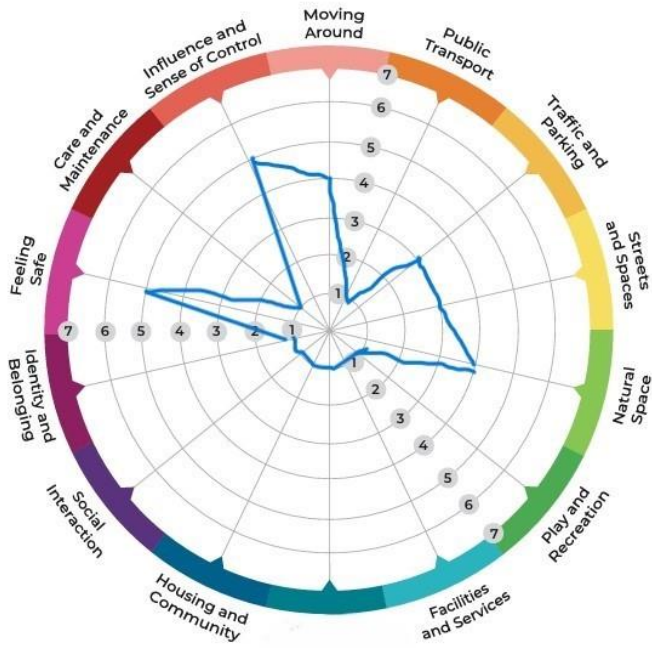
Results from the 2023 questionnaire (see diagrams below pp 18-19) showed that areas of particular concern were moving around, transport, traffic and parking as well as services and homes not meeting community needs. There were mixed views on streets and places, access to the natural environment and play and recreation opportunities, with Birgham residents being significantly happier than residents of the other two villages. Social interaction, influence and control and feeling safe gained good or average scores. (See Appendix 1 for full analysis)

The village consultation in Summer 2024 has revealed that people are generally happy with village life and, particularly in Eccles, value the peaceful environment. Concerns include public transport, footpaths and the proliferation of battery storage in the area. In Eccles, the lack of a village meeting place was noted. Views on preferred methods of communication were mixed. (See Appendix 2 for interim report)

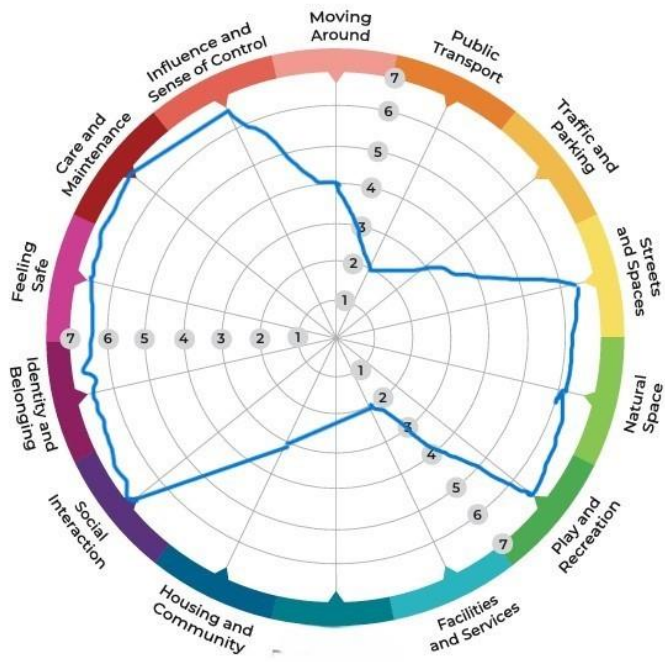
## Place Plan Tool Diagrams 2023



Leitholm



Eccles



**Birgham**

## Section 5 : Results of Engagement

### 5.1 Assets, Opportunities, Needs and Challenges

Assets	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Village Halls in Leitholm and Birgham</li> <li>• Village pubs in Leitholm and Birgham</li> <li>• Heritage sites, particularly in Leitholm and Eccles</li> <li>• Green spaces in all 3 villages</li> <li>• Active inclusive communities in Leitholm and Birgham</li> <li>• High levels of well being and quality of life</li> <li>• Peaceful rural environments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good range of activities and social interaction in Birgham and Leitholm</li> <li>• Community benefits afforded by BESS</li> <li>• Possibilities afforded by wider initiatives eg Active Travel, town centre regenerations, Destination Tweed</li> </ul>
Needs	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Varied means of communication</li> <li>• Improved transport infrastructure</li> <li>• Improved pavements</li> <li>• Footpaths</li> <li>• Renewable energy for domestic and private buildings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Damage potentially caused to the rural environment by BESS initiatives vs need for renewable energy sources</li> <li>• Developing as smaller villages when the focus in LDP2 seems to be on towns</li> <li>• Lack of Scottish Borders transport infrastructure</li> </ul>

## 5.2 Vision

- To promote a vibrant, friendly, supportive and sustainable community, which is well connected, healthy and safe.
- To retain and protect the rural and environmental benefits of the area.

## 5.3 Community Outcomes and Aims

### Outcome 1: Connectivity

Our community will be well connected:

- Our communications network will ensure that our community, both village and rural, know what is happening and have the opportunity to get involved.
- Disability access for both village halls and for events held in all the villages will be communicated
- We will have better public transport for our villages and suitable cycle routes to connect our village with neighbouring villages and towns.

### Outcome 2: Inclusivity

- Our communities will be Vibrant, Friendly and Supportive.
- Our people, irrespective of age or background, will be valued, included and supported.

### Outcome 3: Sustainability

Our community will be sustainable:

We will work with our residents and businesses (including farmers and landowners) and partners towards becoming a greener, more sustainable community. We will explore how we can:

- Better insulate our homes.
- Generate Green Energy.
- Improve on our recycling of materials.



#### **Outcome 4: Health and Wellbeing**

- Our community will be a healthy and safe place to live and work:
- All our people, irrespective of age, will have access to exercise and social interaction.
- All our people will have access to medical services and care support locally.
- Our villages and community will be a safe place to live and work.
- Our village halls will have the equipment and furnishings to provide a resilient, safe hub for our people at times of disruption (eg. relating to energy supply or weather)

#### **Outcome 5: Pride of Place**

- Our communities will be places we are proud to live.

#### **Outcome 6: Rural Environment**

- Our rural environment will be retained for the benefit of our community, our wildlife and fauna and remain a centre for food production.

#### **Outcome 7: Tourism and Heritage**

- Our villages and surrounding area will contribute to and benefit from responsible tourism and heritage development in Berwickshire and the Scottish Borders, maximising the advantages of our natural and physical environments.

## 5.4 Use and Development of Land and Buildings

**Introduction** - Our Community Council area comprises prime agricultural land which surrounds our villages of Leitholm, Eccles and Birgham. We are clear that our agricultural land must be retained for food production and the maintenance of a wide range of flora and fauna. Our Community strongly opposes further industrialisation of our agricultural land through the development of renewables or other non-agricultural purposes. Our villages need to be places with good housing, ideally a focal hub and a place where our people are happy to live with good public services. Our community is opposed to derelict property within our villages and potential proliferation of holiday/second homes.

The following draws on the community consultation to identify the buildings and the areas of land which are central to the Community Led Plan. Proposals for the use and development of these are developed through the community outcomes in section 6 below. The land and buildings in question are identified on the maps in Appendix 3.

**Green Spaces in the villages** – In line with the commitment in the Scottish Borders LDP2 to protecting green spaces in built up areas and to developing brownfield sites, our Community Led Plan places emphasis on retaining and improving the play park in Leitholm, the park/playing field in Birgham and the green area around the school building in Eccles. In Leitholm, there is commitment to the development of a former garage site to encourage biodiversity and the development of wild flower displays at the village entrances. All three villages are committed to improvement of the environment through floral displays and ongoing maintenance. (see outcomes 4 and 5)

**Foot and Cycle Paths** – Connectivity and the ability to move around was an area of concern in the community engagement process. The pavements in all three villages need improvement in terms of condition and accessibility. A key priority is to make them safe (especially given that the population is an ageing one) and wheelchair friendly. (see outcome 4). In addition, all villages intend to make use of existing footpaths and to further develop this to include a path to the Admiral Ramsey Museum in Leitholm and to the Fernyrigg junction from the east end of Birgham. (see outcome 1). A longer term aspiration is to create footpaths and cycle paths linking all three villages (outcome 7)

**Public Buildings** – Our villages each need to have a focal hub where people can meet. (see outcome 2) The community feel strongly that buildings in disuse should be redeveloped. The key buildings in Leitholm are the village hall which is the main social hub of the village, the kirk and the pub. In Eccles all key buildings (village hall, school and church) are now in disuse and there needs to be a plan to develop a focal point for the village. In Birgham, the pub and the village hall are key social hubs and are central to the Community Led Plan. As noted above (p.15), the pub has closed but the community are looking for ways to restore it as a community asset. Birgham Community Development Trust have started the process of developing a plan

for development of the village hall. There is an ongoing SPEN funded project in Birgham and Leitholm to retrofit both village halls with renewable energy. (see outcome 3 )

**Heritage Sites** – In line with its commitment to the preservation of heritage, the LDP2 identifies seven listed buildings in Eccles and a scheduled monument in the form of the remains of a medieval convent in the churchyard. In Leitholm, notable historic sites include an Iron Age Hill Fort, a ruined Peel tower, Stainrigg Well, Mersington Mill and Printonan Bastle ruins. Birgham has one listed building in the form of Springhill House. The village is noted for its role in the 1290 Treaty of Birgham and contains a number of buildings of historical interest. Therefore, celebration of the heritage of the area has formed part of the plan (outcome 7)

**Housing** – Our villages need to have good quality housing which is fit for purpose. The community engagement consultation indicated a concern for making housing more sustainable in terms of renewable energy. (outcome 3) The Settlements section of the LDP2 contains reference to the allocation of one housing development in Leitholm and two in Eccles both yet to be developed. In Birgham, there is concern about the presence of a derelict cottage on land which could be used for housing. All villages are concerned that the majority of private properties should be for the use of permanent residents rather than becoming second homes or holiday cottages.

**Rural Land** – Many residents in the Community Council area live in rural areas beyond the villages. Concerns regarding some aspects of the plan, such as transport are exacerbated in these areas. There is also concern that the Battery Energy Storage developments in the area around Eccles substation will adversely impact the environment. Our Community Council area comprises prime agricultural land which surrounds the villages. We are clear that our agricultural land must be retained for food production and the maintenance of a wide range of flora and fauna. As a community we accept the need for an extension of Eccles Substation and the siting of two Battery Energy Storage facilities to provide grid stability. We have a clear mandate to oppose all other commercial BESS developments on prime agricultural land in our area and intend to monitor planning applications using the CLP as evidence. (outcome 6)

## Section 6 : Proposals/ Community Outcomes linked to Action Plans

### Key

**S** = Short term 2023 - 2025

**M** = Medium term 2023 - 2027

**L** = Long term 2023 – 2033

### Outcome 1: Connectivity

#### Community Council Actions

##### Communication -

- We shall hold consultative meetings in each of our villages and deliver a comprehensive questionnaire to all households in our area. **S**
- We will continue to develop our communications through both electronic means and use of noticeboards. **S**
- We shall develop digital connectivity through a Facebook page, website and e-mail circulation list **S**

We will consult with young people in our area through contact with schools. **M**

We will meet with companies intending to develop Battery Storage sites in our area:

- a. To try to limit the impact on local residents and our rural environment.
- b. To seek mutual partnerships for the benefit of our communities. **L**

##### Public Transport

- We will seek meetings with bus operators and our elected representatives to see what can be done to improve this situation. **S**
- We will explore alternative methods of improving transport for our communities including extension of the demand responsive taxi service, car clubs and car sharing. **M**

### Leitholm Actions

In addition to CC priorities:

- We will secure a second noticeboard for our village **S** (achieved)
- We shall communicate the availability of disability access for the village hall and all events held in the village **S**
- Lack of any Public Transport is a priority for our community, we will campaign for public transport for our village, particularly between Leitholm and Kelso. We will seek and communicate information about Leitholm bus routes, explore potential of the demand responsive taxi service service and/or car club. **M**
- A regular Newsletter design and delivery system will be considered and any relevant funding applied for, as a means of connecting residents in village and outskirts. **S** (achieved)  
Funding for IP support to further develop the newsletter will be explored.
- Planning for a Cycle route linking at least Eccles with Leitholm, will be initiated and relevant funding applied for. **M**
- A grass footpath with signage will link Leitholm village to the newly opened Admiral Ramsay Museum. **M**
- A Core Paths Walking Map and required signage will start to be collated with consultations with relevant land owners and advice sought for product design. **L**

### Eccles Actions

- We shall communicate events to be held in the village including disability access for those events **S**
- Lack of any Public Transport is a priority for our community. We will campaign for public transport for our village. We will explore potential for use of the Community Responsive Taxi Service and/ or car club **M**

### Birgham Actions :

- Development of footpath from Birgham to the Fernyrigg junction has been noted as a priority. The possibility exists for this to be provided by the Hirsell Estate. **S** (update : work commenced on this in September 2024)
- We shall communicate the provision for disability access for our village hall building and all village events **S**
- The location of cycling routes to divert them through Birgham will be explored as a means of enhancing Birgham's interconnectivity **L**

## Outcome 2: Inclusivity

### Community Council Actions

From consultations and questionnaire there are clearly different challenges facing each of our villages.

- We will continue to support the priorities highlighted by our villages and communities. **L**
- We will seek to recruit, support and acknowledge the work of volunteers in our communities. **L**
- We will look to develop policies to allow our communities to work effectively and safely: Safeguarding, Health & Safety. **M**
- We will signpost funding opportunities for our communities to deliver on their priorities. **M**
- We will explore the needs and aspirations of our young people, in particular considering the potential to access youth centres in nearby towns and/ or the use of Live Borders peripatetic youth leaders for activities in our villages **M**

### Leitholm Actions

We shall ensure that our Village Hall is financially secure and a vibrant place for people to meet and participate in a wide range of activities. Through our communications on Facebook, Noticeboard and word of mouth we shall engage a wider range of people in our community. **S** (achieved)

The Village Hall is working in partnership to form a new committee to progress the hall to charitable status

- We will seek to extend the work of our gardening team as a means of enhancing our village and engaging our people. **S** (achieved)
- Leitholm Gardeners and the CC will explore the feasibility of obtaining land for a community garden **M**
- We will explore the potential of a village shop &/ or communicate those goods and services already brought to the village by weekly traders. **M**
- Provide training and support about the use of IT. Obtain funding for installation of Broadband and a TV license at the Village Hall. **S** (achieved)
- Provide those with hearing disability access to a functioning Loop System in the Village Hall. **S** (achieved)
- Apply for the Greener gateway Award 2023. **S** (Silver award for Biodiversity achieved)
- Apply for the Greener Gateway award 2024 (Silver Wee Village award and Gold award for Biodiversity achieved)
- Establish a What's App Friends of Leitholm group. **S**

### **Eccles Actions**

Our village lacks a place to meet and open areas for recreation. In consequence, we currently lack a sense of community. We will engage with Leitholm and Birgham Village Halls to link together to offer Eccles residents joint and independent events. . S

- We will pursue, in partnership with Scottish Borders Council the potential for community use of the disused Primary School. S (Update : Discontinued due to the school now having been sold)
  - We will establish a development group to consult with the community and take forward ideas for village events. An initial event, possibly based around the history of Eccles will be held as a springboard for this S

### **Birgham Actions**

- Our village has an active, vibrant community led by our Birgham Community Development Trust, with a number of clubs and societies in existence. We will work in partnership with BCDT and others to continue this good work in line with our Community Council targets. L
- The village pub and village hall are central to Birgham's sense of place and to its cultural heritage and identity. They are the key social hubs for the village. Maintaining these buildings and institutions as a core part of village life is a key priority. BCDT will liaise with the pub to ensure the future development and co-ordination of social activities. S
- Update – The village pub closed in January 2024. BCDT are investigating the possibility of community ownership via Land Scotland. A questionnaire will be circulated to ascertain residents' views about the pub as a social venue and to garner support for it as a potential community venture.
- At present village social activities are not geared particularly to the engagement of young people, but this will form a future key priority to sustain the village as an inclusive community. L



## Outcome 3: Sustainability

### Community Council Actions

We will work with our residents and businesses (including farmers and landowners) and partners towards becoming a greener, more sustainable community. We will explore how we can:

- Better insulate our homes. **L**
- Generate Green Energy. **L**
- Improve on our recycling of materials. **M**
- We will work in partnership with companies developing battery storage in our area in line with Scottish Government infrastructure plans for a greener community, whilst opposing expansion of the project if this is to the detriment of our rural environment and impact on our people. **L**
  - We will signpost opportunities for our communities to access funding to better insulate their homes or produce green energy. **L**
    - We shall apply for funding to ensure that both village halls use sustainable energy **S**

### Leitholm Actions

- Provide information about sustainable living opportunities / funding / contacts. **M**
- Invite relevant speakers &/ or provide information on topics such as better recycling, zero waste, turning garden waste into community compost and bio-diversity projects. **S** (achieved)
- Enable the village Swap Shop to be a positive asset to use. **M**
- Set up a community garden waste composting system. **S** (achieved)
- In conjunction with the Community Council, we shall continue to apply for funding to install solar panels and battery storage in the village hall **S** (Update : Funding bid via SPEN was not successful)

### Eccles Actions

- We shall explore the possibility of establishing a community store or swap shop for books and local produce in the disused bus shelter **M**
- Once a development group is established, provide information about sustainable living, opportunities, contacts **M**

### Birgham Actions

- Most houses in the village are reliant on oil fired heating. Support for alternatives
- will be explored **S**
- In conjunction with the Community council, we shall apply for funding to install solar panels, battery storage and a heating system in the village hall **S** (Update : SPEN funding bid was unsuccessful. BCDT have applied for funding via an alternative source. )
- Consideration will be given to the provision for electric car charging points in the village, including the possibilities for generating revenue **M**

## Outcome 4: Health and Wellbeing

### Community Council Actions

Road safety within our villages has been highlighted as a priority. . Reductions in policing numbers for Berwickshire alongside high levels of officer extraction means that a programme of regular enforcement is not possible. Policing priority if given to serious accident hotspot areas. Our villages are not priorities. Poor condition of pavements in villages has been highlighted with a specific need that they be disability friendly.

- We will work with partners to explore other means of speeding enforcement. **S**
- We will work with elected members and the council to have our village pavements improved. **M**
- We will support village priorities in relation to access to exercise and social interaction. **S**
- We will monitor feedback in relation to access to medical services and care support locally. **M**
- We shall commission a report on both village halls from the Central Borders Access Panel to ensure disability safety in both venues **S**
- The possibility of creating a Citizens Advice Bureau surgery will be explored across all three villages. **M**
- We shall ensure that our village halls will have the equipment and furnishings to provide a resilient, safe hub for our people in the event of potential energy disruption or during adverse weather conditions. **S**

### Leitholm Actions

- We will work with the full Community Council regarding road safety, pavement and road improvement goals. Particular concern regarding condition of pavements/access for disabled. **L**
- We will continue to promote and communicate the use of our village facilities and classes instigated at our hall. **S**
- We will work with Scottish Borders Council regarding parking issues, in particular at the Ramsay Crescent junction and Coal Lane. **M**
- The formation of buddy groups will be explored to support residents with day to day living needs in the event of extreme weather conditions. **S**

### Eccles Actions

- We will work in with the full Community Council regarding road safety, pavement and road improvement goals. **M**
- Realistically, our main focus will be on linking with Leitholm and Birgham for facilities and events. **S**
- We shall apply for funding to establish a defibrillator in the village **S** (achieved)

### **Birgham Actions**

- We will work with the full Community Council regarding road safety, pavement and road improvement goals. **L**
- In particular, we shall work with SBC to install salt bins throughout the village to ensure safety during the winter months **S**
- The village will continue to maintain pressure regarding the issue of speeding in the village . Possibilities include the use of uniformed officers or trained volunteers and/ or speed cameras. **M**
- BCDT has carried out significant projects over recent years to improve the fabric of our hall and the facilities in our park. We will take stock of what now needs to be done to further enhance our amenities. The park is central to the village's sense of place and social life for all generations. the further development of park amenities will be considered. **S** (Update : Park play equipment, pavilion and table tennis added)
- Consideration will be given to a system of monitoring who is in receipt of health and social care in their homes with a view to generating advisory support within the village community. **M**

## Outcome 5: Pride of Place

### Community Council Actions

Our Village and surrounding area will be neat and tidy, litter free with suitable floral displays. We are delighted in the work which has been done in all three villages through teams of volunteers to enhance the appearance.

- We will continue to support this work through provision/signposting of funding for small projects. **S**

### Leitholm Actions

- We will seek funding to purchase a rechargeable/petrol strimmer to assist us to maintain common ground. **S**
- We will work with villagers to ensure that plants which overgrow our pavements and village signage are managed. **S (achieved)**
- We will start a campaign & display signage / poop bags around the village to support dog owners to clear up after their pets. **S**
- Village flower displays will continue to develop. Shrubs will be planted at the West and East approaches to the village and we will work with Parks and Environment to enhance land owned by SBC. **S (achieved)**
- Replacement village flower tubs made from recycled materials will be made for 2025.
- Play Park railings will be sanded down and repainted with relevant funding and / or SBC support. **M (achieved)**

### Eccles Actions

- We shall investigate the possibility of installing planters in the village **S**
- We shall explore the possibility of a litter bin for runners, walkers and cyclists **S**

### Birgham Actions

- Birgham has a strong tradition of maintaining the village, with volunteers undertaking upkeep of the planters and grass cutting. **S** (Birgham has been awarded the Wee village Greener Gateway award, gold in 2022 and 2023 and silver in 2024)
- The issue of the state of pavements raised above under health and safety is also an issue in relation to the appearance of Birgham and pride of place and, as such, it will continue to be addressed with the SBC with a view to achieving this improvement. **L** (Update : Visit by SBC ascertained that this will not be a short or medium term priority. Hence change of status to long term) **L**
- The presence of a derelict cottage next to the village pub is of some concern. It is an eyesore but also the land could be used more productively eg for housing. The issue will be addressed by contacting the owners and the SBC. **M**

## Outcome 6 : Rural Environment

- We will seek to limit the proliferation of Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) to a sustainable level. **L**
- Where planning permission is granted, we will seek to work in partnership with developers of BESS to mitigate their impact on our communities and environment. **M**
  - Through this partnership we will seek to gain support for our communities from developers, both in kind and financial.

## Outcome 7 : Tourism and Heritage

- Initially we shall research and explore the possibilities for contributing to and benefitting from responsible tourism development in the area, with reference to existing bodies such as the Tweed Forum **S**
- We shall seek to improve footpaths and cycle paths in and around each of the three villages **M**
- We shall promote the heritage and history of each village through publications, events and signage. **S**
- We shall create heritage trails around the villages and surrounding areas **M**
- In the longer term we shall seek to create a joined- up route of foot and cycle paths between the three villages linked to the history and heritage sites and trails, in line with the Active Travel Campaign. **L**

## Appendix 1: Place Plan Questionnaire Analysis 2023

During May 2023 a questionnaire was delivered to all 427 homes in our Community Council area with a covering note explaining that we were seeking views to feed into our Community Plan. 20% of households responded and the results are as follows: (NB not all those who responded answered every question. Others did not have a strong view to some questions)

### 1. Moving Around:

#### a. How easy is it to move around and get to where I want to go?

	% Happy/Very Happy	% Unhappy/Very Unhappy
Leitholm	19	53
Eccles	32	21
Birgham	35	29

#### b. What is public transport like in my place?

	% Happy/Very Happy	% Unhappy/Very Unhappy
Leitholm	0	84
Eccles	5	68
Birgham	18	35

#### c. How Does Traffic & parking affect how I move around?

	% Happy/Very Happy	% Unhappy/Very Unhappy
Leitholm	16	47
Eccles	26	53
Birgham	24	29

	Leitholm	Eccles	Birgham
Comments Q1.			
Potholes/road condition in village	1		2
Speeding in village (tractors esp)	10	1	7
More frequent (any) bus service/evenings	7	2	8
New Footpaths (Birgham to Kelso/Birgham to Home Farm)	5		9
Hedges overhanging pavement	5		1
Pavements need maintained for all mobility needs	12	2	6
Dangerous Parking (Kelso end of Birgham)	6		8
Pingo service user	3		

Paths need maintenance (overgrown with nettles)			1
Cycle paths needed	1		
Lack of public Transport		2	

## 2. Streets and Places:

### a. What are the buildings streets & Public Places like in my place?

	% Happy/Very Happy	% Unhappy/Very Unhappy
Leitholm	31	22
Eccles	21	26
Birgham	74	6

### b. How easy is it for me to regularly enjoy natural space?

	% Happy/Very Happy	% Unhappy/Very Unhappy
Leitholm	41	28
Eccles	37	21
Birgham	62	9

Comments Q2.	Leitholm	Eccles	Birgham
Suggest footpath maintenance volunteer group			1
A lovely place to live	3		2
Core paths map	5		
More village seating	2		
Community garden needed	1		
Need for paths to be better signposted		1	
Closed School & Building plots not developed		1	

## 3. How good are the spaces and opportunities for play and recreation in my place?

	% Happy/Very Happy	% Unhappy/Very Unhappy
Leitholm	31	25
Eccles	0	47
Birgham	76	6

Comments Q3	Leitholm	Eccles	Birgham
Self closing gate for playpark for child safety			1



Play Park is good	6		
Limited Pub opening times			1
Park needs maintenance	1		1
Need village recreation area	6	4	
Old School could be used - playground could be installed		1	
No street lighting		1	
No meeting place in village		2	
All village amenities lost over the years		1	

#### 4. How well do services in my place meet my needs?

	% Happy/Very Happy	% Unhappy/Very Unhappy
Leitholm	9	47
Eccles	0	79
Birgham	12	50

Comments Q4	Leitholm	Eccles
Would like a community shop in village	7	
There are no or very restricted services (inc Pub opening hours)	11	4
Would like post office services in village	3	
Need mobile repair and share service	1	
Supposed to be mobile post office - never turns up		1

#### 5. How well do the homes in my place meet the needs of my community?

	% Happy/Very Happy	% Unhappy/Very Unhappy
Leitholm	6	25
Eccles	5	37
Birgham	29	21

Comments Q5	Leitholm	Eccles	Birgham
Need for more houses to have Green energy (Solar)	3		1
More information needed re Govt Grants for improvement	3	1	1
No mains gas in village			1
Total lack of facilities or services (Only mobile library)		2	
No info available re funding to improve old properties		1	

## 6. Social Interaction:

### a. How good is the range of opportunities which allow me to meet & spend time others?

	% Happy/Very Happy	% Unhappy/Very Unhappy
Leitholm	53	9
Eccles	0	58
Birgham	91	3

### b. To what extend does my place have a positive identity?

	% Happy/Very Happy	% Unhappy/Very Unhappy
Leitholm	25	25
Eccles	0	53
Birgham	79	3

Comments Q6	Leitholm	Eccles	Birgham
Very sociable and supportive village (local estates to be more involved)	5		3
Good village hall activities	9		2
Need an information hub	5		
Wildlife spaces needed	3		
Excellent Newsletter			1
CC starting to increase planters and flowers in village	2		
No information circulated re events etc		1	
Commends Leitholm Hall access & activities		1	
there are none		1	

## 7. How well is my place cared for?

	% Happy/Very Happy	% Unhappy/Very Unhappy
Leitholm	19	28
Eccles	5	42
Birgham	74	6

Comments Q7	Leitholm	Eccles	Birgham
Derelict site poor appearance	1		
Cemetery maintenance (gates, Gravestones)	4		
War memorial routine care needed	1		
Trees and shrubs removed from village centre - need replacing		1	

Overgrown areas on Main Street/rotten seat next to bus shelter		2	
Eccles has gone downhill badly in past 10 years		1	
Good to see planters & Christmas Tree		1	
Efforts of Community members appreciated			3
More trees appreciated			1
Bus Shelters looking tired			1

## 8. Influence and control:

### a. When things happen in my place how well am I listened to and included?

	% Happy/Very Happy	% Unhappy/Very Unhappy
Leitholm	38	31
Eccles	42	16
Birgham	68	3

### b. How safe does my place make me feel?

	% Happy/Very Happy	% Unhappy/Very Unhappy
Leitholm	47	6
Eccles	42	16
Birgham	68	3

Comments Q8	Leitholm	Eccles	Birgham
Fear of Crime			1
Not using computer or facebook	5		
Regular newsletter needed (Flyer distribution points)	7		
Improvement over recent months thanks to CC rep			1
Thanks to Birgham enews - Fiona Livingston			1
Village notice boards used (need 3rd one West end)	2		
Neighbourhood watch needed (no cold callers signage)	2		
Personally feel safe		2	1
Questionnaire and recent News for village excellent - Thanks		1	
A village contact list for emergency situations would be good.		1	
Having difficulty getting access to CC Facebook page		2	
Things have improved 100% in recent months		1	
Good to have new noticeboard		1	
Loanknowe to Crosshall improved for cyclists & walkers		1	

**OTHER ISSUES RAISED:**

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Leitholm</b>	<b>Eccles</b>	<b>Birgham</b>
Request to leave part of graveyard uncut for nature			1
Free roaming dogs around Treaty Park			1
Dog fouling			1
Potential for Dog training field			1
Concern re Battery Farm/lack of consultation			
Litter on roadsides			1
Potential for Allotments/Veg beds Eccles Road beyond Hall?			1
Social identity developed for Swinton Mill	1		
Gritting on pavements	3		
Power cuts policy (Resident support group made)	1		
Car share or shopping buddy support groups made	2		
Questionnaire not applicable for rural area	2		
Bridge give way sign needed	2		
Extend lighting over bridge	1		
limited IT skills in village (start classes)	2		
Village reps information and Place Plan shared	1		
yellow lines near Ramsay Court entrance	1		
Village hall needs Wi Fi	1		
Village Hall needs Loop system checked	1		
Street Lighting too bright at night	1		
Village Hall kitchen needs upgrade	1		
Need Village hall parking area (field opposite?)	1		
Need Village history highlighted more		1	
Information board in village cluld be used for tourists		1	
Frequency of spreading slurry - now all year round - air pollution		1	
We need to create community identity and have a focal point		1	
I hope the new community plan is a success		1	
Monument near Crosshall should have information notice on it			1
Interested in plans for school & old village hall			1
Interested in plans for building plots (next to Eccles Mains)			1
Access to home/village composting would be good			1

## Appendix 2: Report on Community Consultation Summer 2024



### VILLAGE CONSULTATION SUMMER 2024

#### Initial report:

This consultation involved calling door to door in our villages with our questionnaire having open questions to illicit conversation. As such it does not contain specific statistical data.

#### **LEITHOLM:**

We spoke to residents in approximately 1 in 4 homes.

General: village life, what could be better, public services use of Community Benefit from BESS: Consensus was that people were happy with life in the village with comments about it being friendly, good neighbours and peaceful. People “Just like staying here”. Many mentioned recent improvements “the appearance has gone up a gear” with flower boxes etc. Also commended the range of activities in the hall.

What could be better: Concerns re lack of public transport from a high percentage of residents. Better footpaths, both in the village and the general area. Many are concerned regarding the proliferation of BESS with only one person not in agreement with CC stance to object to all future development. Traffic issues in the village include: speeding and volume of heavy good vehicles.

Use of Community Benefits: To of the list would be access to public/community transport to Kelse. Village improvements including tree planting and paths. Access to youthwork mentioned. Potential to employ a member of staff part time to administer the hall (popular), with similar suggestion to manage common areas in the village.

Communication: There was a clear mix with some people preferring a Newsletter on the Noticeboard, others a hand delivered newsletter and yet others email updates or village Facebook.

#### **ECCLES:**

We spoke to residents in approximately 1 in 4 houses.

General: Overwhelming positive of life in Eccles is that it is peaceful. A lovely village. Most people happy with the village as it is.

One resident would be interested in starting a home based book club in the village.

What could be better: The village lacks a focal point, for many, this would just be somewhere folks would meet for a chat. A few people expressed their disquiet that the village hall had been closed and handed over without village consultation. This said, all admitted that it had been poorly used/supported. Also accepted that it is probably too big for current needs. A few responses were in favour of a smaller hall/meeting room in the village, although they were unclear what it would/could be used for. The majority of those spoken to had an open mind with regard to closer ties to either Leitholm or Birgham as either would provide access to a meeting place. A good number already attend the events organised at Leitholm Village Hall.

Public Transport was a major talking point with many seeking better public transport to and from Kelso, albeit some were unaware of the current limited service in place. For those with children, additional buses/transport to allow access to after school activities and to local towns is important.

Residents are comfortable with Olivers Transport in the village, with some stating that they are 'good neighbours'. This said, there is disquiet about the unsightly unfinished works by Scottish Water to provide a sewage tank. Many allude to the unwelcome increase of heavy good vehicles using the village as a route to service Eccles Substation expansion.

A need for the village to be kept tidier was mentioned by a few.

A need for local recycling facilities within the village, in particular a bottle bank.

The majority support the CC stance on proliferation of BESS, however, a few are 'not bothered'.

Re use of Community Benefit monies: once again a range of views – better public transport is high on the agenda, a meeting place/playfield from some and access for activities for children and young people.

Communication: Most have access to Facebook/Website while others would prefer a printed newsletter on noticeboard.

Business: We spoke to Kenny Oliver, Oliver's Transport. Kenny is also a resident in the village. He is happy with both life in the village and the village as a home for his business. Some concerns regarding the speed of some vehicles in the village and the volume of lorries passing through to service work at the substation. He is also frustrated by the time being taken to complete the slurry tank in the vicinity of this business by Scottish Water.

## BIRGHAM:

100% of households indicated that they are very happy living in the village.

Fisherman's Arms: We asked whether residents would wish the Community Council to support opposing any change of use of the Fisherman's Arms in the event that this was requested in a planning application. Only 40% of those who responded provided a clear 'Yes'. For the remainder the feeling was that most would prefer the pub to remain as a pub/eating establishment, however, given the recent history of failed enterprises and long periods of un-occupation, a change of use was preferable to the property continuing in a similar cycle of events.

What should Community Council Priorities be going forward? The main priorities highlighted were road safety followed parks and recreation. Healthcare and social care services were also of concern.

100% of those who responded support the Community Council stance in opposing all further BESS development in the area.

Community Benefit: Once again the concept of significant monies in community benefit over time was difficult for people to grasp. Priorities included village improvements (rural paths, buy the pub, community wifi village shop), youthwork provision (pilot), support for our community to access green energy. There was a strong view that the money should not be used for work that SBC is responsible for or for ongoing routine costs..

44% of those we spoke to indicated that they would use additional public transport, if available.

90% are kept informed through the Birgham Village e'news.

## **Appendix 3: Maps showing key land and buildings**

### **3a Leitholm**

**(site of pollinator project and wild flower planting indicated by blue lines)**

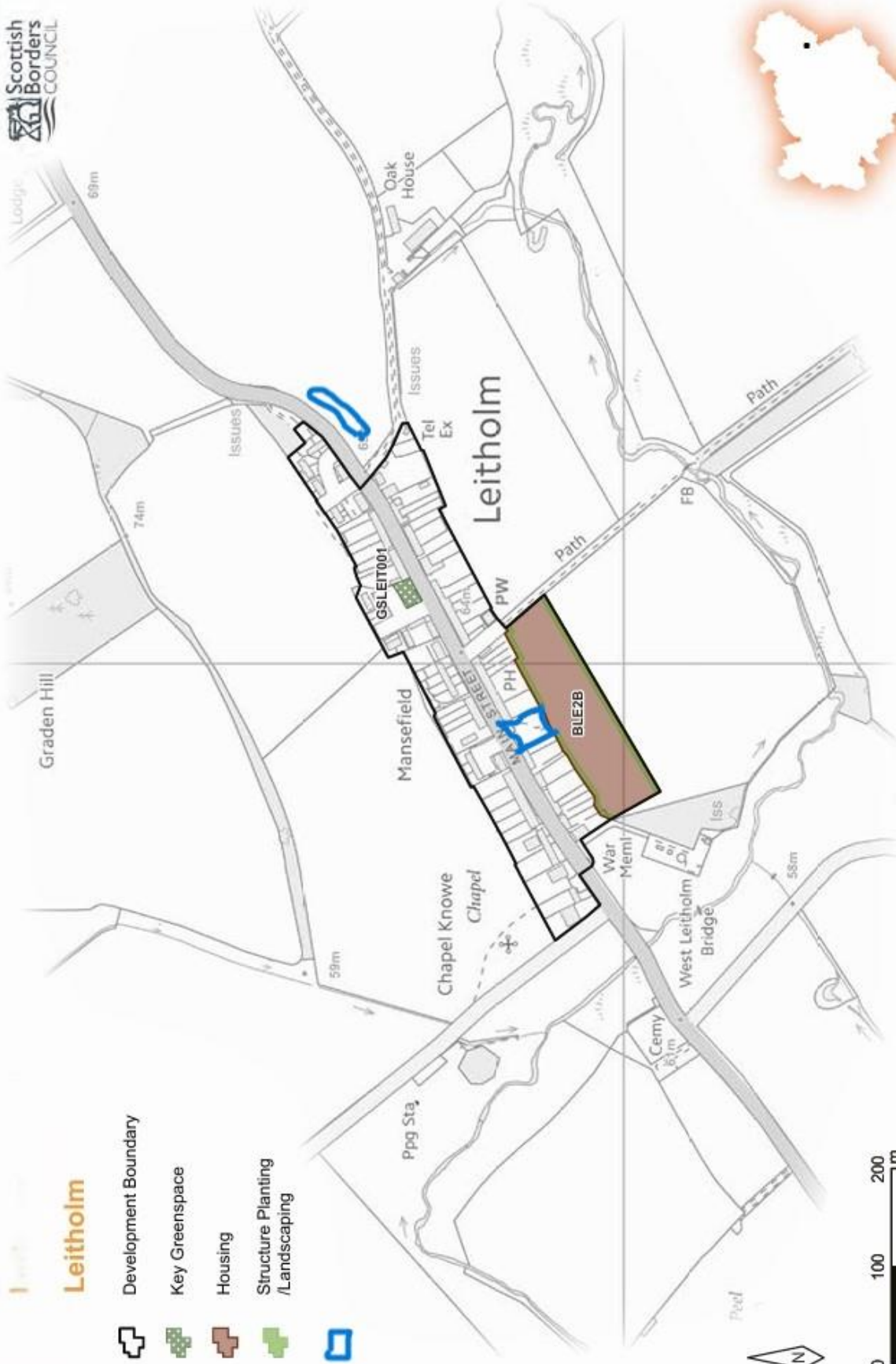
### **3b Eccles**

### **3c Birgham**

**(site of derelict cottage and path to Fernyrigg junction indicated by blue lines)**

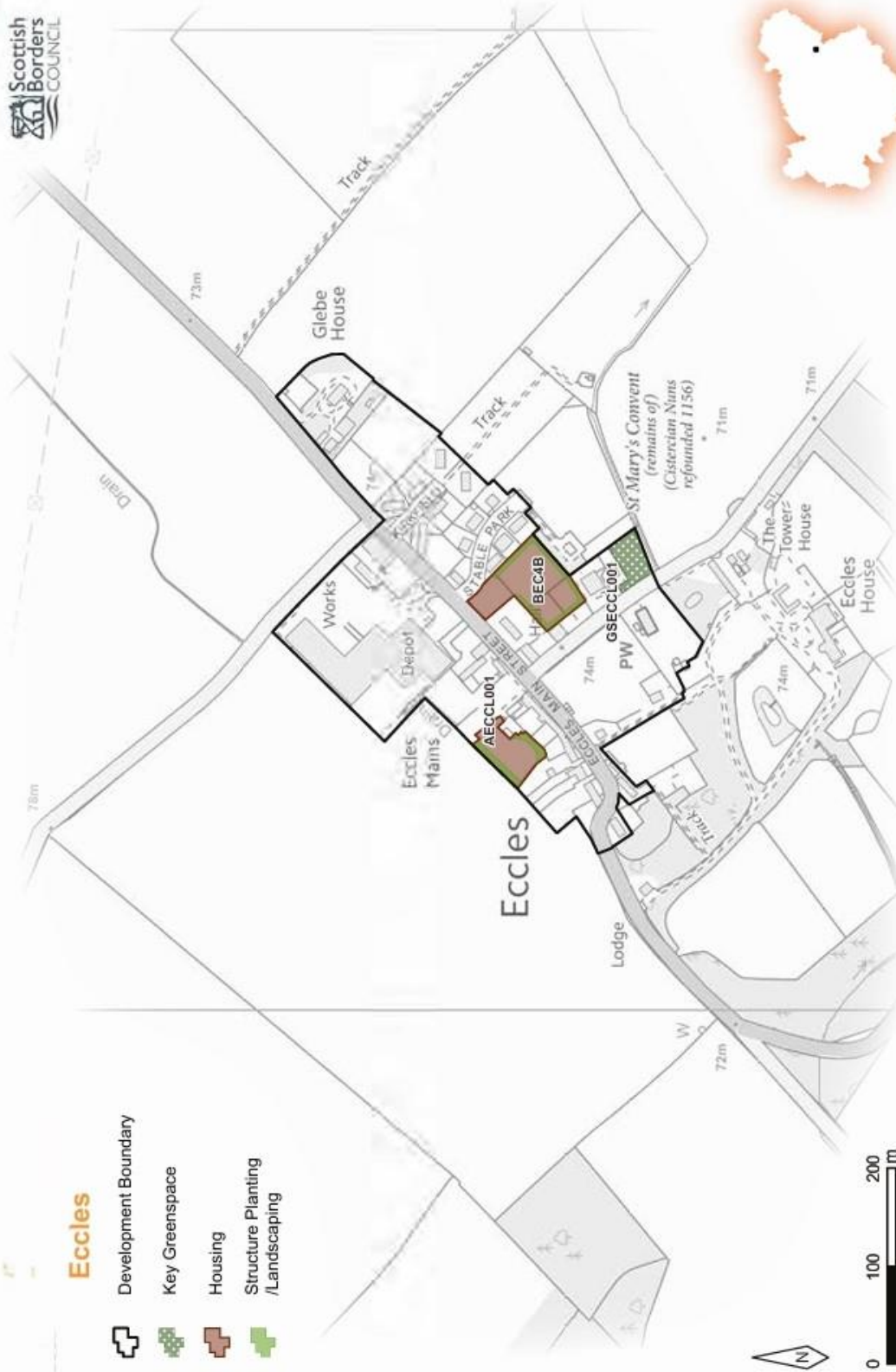
### **3d/e BESS developments**





-  Development Boundary
-  Key Greenspace
-  Housing
-  Structure Planting /Landscaping
- 

**Leitholm**



© Crown Copyright and database right 2024. All rights reserved. Ordnance Survey Licence number AC0000851940.  
 For further information, including help reading this document, please contact: Planning Policy & GIS, Council Headquarters, Newtown St Boswells, Melrose, TD6 0SA. Tel: 01835 825010. Email: localplan@scotborders.gov.uk  
 Disclaimer: Scottish Borders Council uses spatial information from a range of sources to produce the mapping contained within this document. The mapping is for illustrative purposes only. The original sources should be consulted to confirm information.





Appendix 1 - Map of Planned BESS Developments within the Leitholm, Eccles & Birgham Community Council area





- Planned BESS Developments within 2.5km of Leitholm**
1. Zenobe, 65 acres, 2.0km from Leitholm, 400 MW storage
  2. Eccles Energy, 15 acres, 2.2km, 500 MW storage
  3. Amp Energy, 3 acres, 2.0 km, 50 MW storage
  4. Laundry Field, 72 acres, 0.9 km, 500 MW storage
  5. Pittleshugh, 22 acres, 2.5 km, 340 MW storage
  6. Bishops Dal, 27 acres, 2.5km, 150 MW storage
- Total: 204 acres (14 x Size of Leitholm village) / 128 football pitches / 1,940 MW (9.7% of total UK 2035 minimum storage needs)**

# Appendix 4 : Information Notices and Related Correspondence

## 4a Information Notice to Councillors

Dear Councillors

We are contacting you on behalf of Leitholm, Eccles and Birgham Community Council. . Our local community has prepared a proposed Local Place Plan – Leitholm, Eccles and Birgham Community Led Plan 2023 – 2033

We are legally required to send each local authority Councillor for our Local Place Plan area which lies in mid Berwickshire the information below, to comply with Section 4 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Place Plans) (Scotland) Regulations 2021. This email constitutes the 'Information Notice' to local Councillors required by those Regulations.

### 1. Proposed Local Place Plan

The proposed Local Place Plan is available at [Documents & Links — LEB-CC](#)  
Please click on View and Download to see the latest amended version of our plan.

### 2. Brief description of the content and purpose of the proposed Local Place Plan

The proposed Local Place Plan covers the area of Leitholm, Eccles, Birgham and surrounding rural areas.

The proposed Local Place Plan contains proposals relating to 7 key priorities

Connectivity (improved transport and communication (including digital)

Inclusivity ( creating, maintaining and developing a social hub for each village)

Sustainability ( to deliver projects for renewable energy sources in the village halls and to explore such opportunities for private dwellings)

Health and wellbeing ( to address issues relating to road and pavement safety, to create warm and safe hubs for times of energy disruption and to monitor health and social care provision)

Pride of Place ( maintaining and enhancing the village environments)

Rural Environment ( to retain the area as prime agricultural land whilst also supporting existing battery storage developments)

Tourism and heritage ( to develop the history and heritage potential of the villages and surrounding area in the context of responsible tourism)

These relate mainly to green spaces within and around the villages, the village halls in Birgham and Leitholm, proposed and existing pavements, footpaths and cycle paths, housing, historical and heritage sites and the agricultural land surrounding the villages.

The purpose of our proposed Local Place Plan is to build on identified community strengths and assets to promote a vibrant, supportive and sustainable community which is well connected, healthy and safe. We intend to draw on the plan to attract funding and to influence the next Scottish Borders Council Local Development Plan.

**3. Information as to how and to whom any representations on the content of the proposed Local Place Plan should be made and the date by which they should be made**  
If you have comments on our proposed Local Place Plan, please email them to us at

[leitholmecclesbirghamcc@gmail.com](mailto:leitholmecclesbirghamcc@gmail.com)

The deadline for comments is **February 24 2025**

We are sending similar Information Notices to our adjoining, active Community Councils as required by the Local Place Plan Regulations.

Please let us know if you have any queries.  
Kind regards



## 4b Information Notice to Community Councils

Dear Community Councils

We are contacting you on behalf of Leitholm, Eccles and Birgham Community Council. Our community has prepared a proposed Local Place Plan – Leitholm, Eccles and Birgham Community Led Plan 2023 – 2033.

We are legally required to send each Community Council whose area is wholly or partly within our Local Place Plan area, or adjoins it, the information below. This is in order to comply with Section 4 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Place Plans) (Scotland) Regulations 2021. This email constitutes the 'Information Notice' to local Community Councils required by those Regulations.

This Information Notice is therefore being sent to the following Community Councils:

Gavinton, Fogo and Polwarth  
Swinton and Ladykirk  
Coldstream and District  
Sprouston  
Ednam, Stitchill and Berrymoss  
Greenlaw and Hume  
Carham Parish Council

### 1. Proposed Local Place Plan

The proposed Local Place Plan is available at [Documents & Links — LEB-CC](#)  
Please click on View and Download to see the latest amended version of our Community Led Plan.

### 2. Brief description of the content and purpose of the proposed Local Place Plan

The proposed Local Place Plan covers the area of Leitholm, Eccles, Birgham and surrounding rural areas.

The proposed Local Place Plan contains proposals relating to 7 key priorities

Connectivity (improved transport and communication (including digital))

Inclusivity (creating, maintaining and developing a social hub for each village)

Sustainability (to deliver projects for renewable energy sources in the village halls and to explore such opportunities for private dwellings)

Health and wellbeing (to address issues relating to road and pavement safety, to create warm and safe hubs for times of energy disruption and to monitor health and social care provision)

Pride of Place (maintaining and enhancing the village environments)

Rural Environment (to retain the area as prime agricultural land whilst also supporting existing battery storage developments)

Tourism and heritage (to develop the history and heritage potential of the villages and surrounding area in the context of responsible tourism)

These relate mainly to green spaces within and around the villages, the village halls in Birgham and Leitholm, proposed and existing pavements, footpaths and cycle paths, housing, historical and heritage sites and the agricultural land surrounding the villages.

The purpose of our proposed Local Place Plan is to build on identified community strengths and assets to promote a vibrant, supportive and sustainable community which is well connected,



healthy and safe. We intend to draw on the plan to attract funding and to influence the next Scottish Borders Council Local Development Plan.

**3. Information as to how and to whom any representations on the content of the proposed Local Place Plan should be made and the date by which they should be made**

If you have comments on our proposed Local Place Plan, please email them to us at [leitholmecclesbirghamcc@gmail.com](mailto:leitholmecclesbirghamcc@gmail.com)

The deadline for comments is **February 24 2025**

We are sending similar Information Notices to our local councillors as required by the Local Place Plan Regulations.

Please let us know if you have any queries.