

PROPOSED LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN, 2013

COMMENTS BY ROGER OAKES

Reivers Retreat, Deanfoot Roads, West Linton, EH46 7DX



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CHAPTER 2, MEETING THE CHALLENGES

Paragraph 2.17

I am pleased to see that SBC is going to take the potential problems of Flood Plains seriously

Paragraph 2.18

On-shore wind turbines are technically well suited to much of Scottish Borders, subject to two constraints. Firstly there is the requirement to meet the demands of the Eskdalemuir Test Ban Treaty monitoring facility. I understand that efforts are being made to minimise the restrictions that this very important facility needs to impose. Secondly on-shore wind turbines are very obtrusive in landscape areas considered by much of the public to be "unspoilt". This landscape is not in any way "natural" or "wild", it is in fact rather bleak, having had centuries of over grazing by sheep. However, it still makes for very good recreational walking, providing some degree of a feeling of remoteness. There is urgent need to do what can be done to ensure security of electrical energy supplies and on-shore wind farms can make a useful contribution. Thus we have a conflict between on one hand an extremely vocal and well supported set of people who object to on-shore wind farms wherever they arise and on the other hand the need for reliable non-fossil electricity supplies. The tone of this paragraph, together with the map figure ED9a, suggest that for the identification of acceptable sites the objectors have the upper hand.

It would be nice if off-shore wind farms could be substituted for on-shore. However, the economics of off-shore electricity generation appear to be unsatisfactory, it being three or more times as expensive to install and maintain the turbines. There are possible severe detrimental maritime environmental consequences from off-shore wind farms.

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CHAPTER 3, VISION ETC.

Paragraph 3.11

This paragraph in some ways might be regarded as the key element of this LDP. Understandably much is hung on trying to make something of developing the central Borders towns. For an urban area to succeed requires some particular locational advantages. I am unclear what these advantages might be. The new railway from Edinburgh may have some limited effect in encouraging Stow, Galashiels, and Tweedbank to become dormitory towns for Edinburgh. I can think of no significant industries which might find a lasting home in central Borders. The railway is now probably too far on its way to be abandoned. This project owes far more to romanticism than economic realism.

Paragraph 3.17

While here only the A7 and A68 are mentioned, I am relieved to see that other key roads, in particular the A72, are included in Policy IS4.

I find the aspiration to continue the Borders railway on to Carlisle ridiculous.

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POLICY PMD1

In this worthy list of intentions item (g) should imply rigorous rejection of sporadic developments in the countryside, in particular large houses likely to be occupied by commuters.

I am doubtful whether item (k) is consistent with the overall aims of this policy

POLICY PMD2

Paragraph 1.1

I am pleased to see that this policy is aimed at “not just housing”.

Paragraph 1.4

If the focus is to have people walk or cycle to local destinations then speed limits, wherever practical need to be reduced, traffic calming measures should be taken and there should be plenty of useful places to park, and secure bicycles. Plans should include convenient, suitably surfaced and safe connectivity for pedestrians within settlements.

POLICY PMD5

Criterion (d)

I look forward in the future to witness infill development having to respect the scale, form, design and density of the surroundings. It will be a change!

POLICY ED10

I am glad to see included in this policy the words “particularly peat”.

Figure ED10a

I assume many have already pointed out that the key for this map is the wrong way round.

POLICY ED12

Restoration and aftercare gets a brief mention at the end of this policy statement.

I understand that in parts of South Lanarkshire the council has been left with clearing up the mess after opencast mining because the relevant parts of permissions had not been as rigorously specified as they should have been. This potential problem should be addressed in ED12.

POLICY HD1

This policy, as it is drafted, does little to try to avoid groups of affordable houses ending up as ghettos.

POLICY HD2 (F)

Housing in the countryside where there is an economic requirement

I am not sure that this sub-policy is rigorous enough to prevent 50 acres or more of sub-marginal land being used as an excuse to build a commuter house in a rural location.

POLICY IS3

It is as well to have this provision in the Local Development Plan. However, I feel there will be few instances where it can be adequately demonstrated that a development would benefit from, or be enhanced by, the re-instatement of the rail link.

POLICY IS5

I support this policy.

POLICY IS7

I am glad to see cycle parking within the first sentence of this policy

POLICY IS8

As worded this policy seems to find building would be acceptable provided enough paper work is done in areas with a greater than 0.5% annual flooding probability for all but a few special categories of development.

Developing in areas where flooding might be possible has always been a questionable matter. Global warming and recent experiences in significant other parts of the British Isles suggest that any developments with a discernable flood risk should be disallowed.

POLICY IS12

I support this policy

POLICY IS15

Siting and design consideration (a)

I suggest after "Conservation Areas" inserting the words "or their settings"

This would be to avoid obtrusive structures impinging on the appearance of a Conservation Area

POLICY IS16

While in general I am an enthusiastic about controlling advertisements, I think some thought might be given for allowing temporary roadside signs announcing local volunteer run events, where road safety would not be impaired. Such temporary advertisements are in fact common practice and, provided they do not linger beyond the time of the events being announced, they cause no harm.