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From: Mark Rowley
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To: localplan
Subject: Representation from Cranshaws, Ellemford & Longformacus Community Council to the LDP relating to Settlements
Attachments: Cranshaws, Ellemford & Longformacus CC response to Local Development Plan on Settlements.docx

A supplementary representation relating to settlements in the LDP

Best wishes

Mark Rowley
Chairman, Cranshaws, Ellemford & Longformacus Community Council

CRANSHAWS, ELLEMFORD & LONGFORMACUS COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Response from Cranshaws, Ellemford and Longformacus Community Council to the Proposed Local Plan, Volume 2, Settlements.

March 2014.

OMMISSION OF THE VILLAGE OF CRANSHAWS AND SETTLEMENT OF ELLEMFORD FROM THE PROPOSED LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN.

Our Community Council remain concerned that the omission of any settlement profile for two of our settlements, Ellemford and Cranshaws, put our already marginal community at further disadvantage.

Smaller villages and settlements ought to be recognised with a profile. These villages and settlements are where many residents in rural areas live; they are important to local life and add significantly to the character, sense of place and life of the wider area.

Smaller settlements and villages are an intrinsic part of what makes the Borders the special place it is. Settlements such as Ellemford and Cranshaws that frequently draw people to the Borders to live, work, visit or invest and cumulatively they are important.

Whilst these settlements may be small on a regional scale, locally they are large and important centres as much of our local population live in dispersed farms and cottages at some distance from settlements. We should recognise that many of the settlements identified in the Scottish Borders Local Development Plan would be ignored in other areas, but it is the responsibility of Scottish Borders Council to fully account for the settlements within its territory.

The core function of a LDP is to identify opportunities for development. Perhaps development opportunities within smaller communities are modest or minimal, but to deny them a Settlement Profile makes even small and appropriate developments so much less likely.

In small communities very modest development, just a few houses, can make a step-change in the community's viability.

Our Community Council recognise that the social and economic viability of our small rural communities is largely dependent on halting depopulation and encouraging some population growth. Identifying modest opportunities for sensitive development, whether new housing or the appropriate reuse of historic or agricultural buildings appropriate to the scale of our communities is important.

We feel that the Local Development Plan requires to identify possible development opportunities on a truly local scale, not just at the regional scale.

We are supportive of much of Policy HD2 Housing in the Countryside. We particularly support the sentiments in paras a, b and c to “promote appropriate rural housing development “in village locations in preference to the open countryside” ...associated with existing building groups” ...”in dispersed communities”. We suggest that the policies recognised here as vital to enhancing communities in parts of the Southern Borders are entirely relevant to small dispersed communities such as our own.

To deny long-standing, but smaller, settlements a Settlement Profile also risks inviting inappropriate development. The Settlement Profile with its development boundary and the place making and infrastructure considerations guides potential developers towards appropriate development. Without that guidance and protection should development proposals come forward they would not be informed by the guidance of a settlement profile and may respond less-well than if the settlement had been defined.

CRANSHAWS

The village of Cranshaws has a historic past and is currently the centre of vibrant local estates and farms. It is the second-largest of our Lammermuir settlements with a busy village hall and the only functioning local Kirk.

Unusually it occupies two linked areas, perhaps similar in many ways to the twin development boundary sites identified in the LDP for Roberton? Like Roberton it is a few miles from the local town (Hawick/Duns) and has a rural hinterland beyond it (Ettrick Valley/The Lammermuirs).

Part of the village is between the B6355 and the Whitadder including the listed Kirk and Manse, the former school and school house and the village hall. The other part of the village is a few hundred metres west centred on the A-listed Tower House, Cranshaws House, Cranshaws Farm, the site of the former Kirk and numerous cottages.

Notably Cranshaws was the last of the Lammermuir rural schools to close; it is home to the only remaining active Lammermuir Kirk and has a vibrant village hall that is a focus for the dispersed farmsteads as well as the village.

Of relevance to the LDP is that it already has an area with consent for housing development to the north end of the village, yet it is denied a settlement profile that would identify this. As it perhaps has similarities to Ettrick (Hopehouse) in the LDP in scale, style and location our Community Council would agree entirely with;

“Although the local school and pub have closed recently, the presence of a church and village hall make the aforesaid building groups suitable for small housing allocations.” We suggest this is relevant to the Lammermuirs too and particularly recognise that “Maintaining a viable population to support the retention of local facilities in this remote area is desirable.”

Without the facility that the Local Development Plan Settlement Profiles offer to define the opportunities, needs and characteristics of our settlements we risk deterring appropriate

development, development that could add significantly to the vibrancy and viability of smaller rural communities.

ELLEMFORD

Ellemford is the third of the settlements that make up our Lammermuir community. It is perhaps more of a settlement and less of a village, unlike Longformacus and Cranshaws, having lost its Kirk and inn some time ago. Despite its lack of public buildings it has significant character and charm, much of it deriving from its location at the crossroads of a river and road and from its connection to the estate of Whitchester which is responsible for much of the picturesque character of many of its buildings.

It sits to both sides of the B6355 Duns to Gifford road and to both north and south of the Whitadder. The splendid B-listed 1886 bridge over the Whitadder is a central focus.

As a settlement it boasts a notable number of listed buildings, including a particularly-high proportion of B-listed ones. They include the Ellemford Bridge, Whitchester Lodge, Whitchester House, Whitchester House Walled Garden and Ellem Lodge.

There is a significant history to Ellemford. It was a key mustering point before Flodden, it was the home of one of the world's most ancient angling associations and is the site of an early (but ruined) Kirk.

In development terms Ellemford has benefited from appropriate recent development with some new homes and ancillary development that has added to the population and enhanced community involvement. Sensitive additional development may assist the area if appropriately-sited.

The Local Development plan could look to use the current brown field agricultural site at Whitchester Sawmill, other potential opportunities related to the Whitchester Estate including the walled garden and opportunities for additional homes. The listed, but abandoned, Ellemhaugh Smiddy could be returned to sustainable use if developed with sensitivity to its riverside location.

LONGFORMACUS

Place Making Considerations note a high proportion of listed buildings within this small village. A significant number, including the terminal buildings at each end of The Row, Mill House, Honey House and Ash Cottage all display a distinctive local "estate" style. Possibly that of George Fortune of Duns.

Consideration ought to be given to making Longformacus a conservation area? It remains largely within its traditional footprint and nearby listed buildings (Longformacus House, Doocot, Walled Garden and Craigie Lodge) all add to the charming character and a sense of place, as does its setting along the Dye and its Lammermuir backdrop.

The Settlement Profile slightly understates the listed building count. Within the development boundary there are 13 C listed and 1 B listed building – Longformacus Kirk. Other A-listed ones are just out with it.

The Community Council recognise that our communities are increasingly-fragile as populations decline, local employment opportunities dwindle and local facilities (such as school, Kirk etc) close. We would welcome consideration to encourage a small amount of sensitive, small-scale housing development within this settlement to help bolster population levels. This would help counter the effects of a significant number of holiday homes, a lack of affordable housing and the impact of Longformacus increasingly becoming a commuter dormitory.

We welcome the protection of key green space in the LDP but suggest that within the settlement boundary the Old (Kirk) Graveyard ought to have a similar designation and the New Graveyard just outside the boundary too.

We would question the Dye's risk of flooding in the vicinity of the village. In 1947 it didn't flood and since then its main tributary, the Watch, has been dammed to create the Watch Water Reservoir.