



2018

SCOTTISH BORDERS LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2 ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT



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Non-Technical Summary

Introduction: Purpose and Statutory Requirement

The Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended by the Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006, requires Scottish Borders Council to prepare a Local Development Plan (LDP), these must be updated every 5 years. The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is a systematic tool for considering the likely significant environmental effects of Plans, Programs and Strategies (PPS). The Interim Environment Report (IER) constitutes the SEA assessment of the new LDP2 Main Issues Report (MIR) and relates solely to the '*main issues*' stage in the preparation of the LDP2. The purpose of this IER is to identify and record the likely significant effects of implementing the LDP2 (MIR). The SEA considers how environmental impacts can be avoided, reduced, mitigated, or in the case of positive effects, enhanced. It concentrates on the elements that are likely to result in significant environmental effects, either directly or indirectly.

The following stages are involved in producing the final Environmental Report (ER). The first stage is the production of a Scoping Report, followed by the publication of the IER, 12 week consultation period, Post Adoption Statement and finally monitoring. The IER will be updated at the Proposed Plan stage, where a finalised ER will be presented alongside the Proposed Plan.

Planning Context: LDP MIR

The LDP sets out the Council's strategy, policies and proposals for the use of land and buildings and is the document used to determine planning applications and provide advice on development proposals.

The MIR is a forerunner to the Council's forthcoming LDP2. It seeks to encourage public engagement and comment on a wide range of matters, identifying key development and land use issues which the LDP2 must address. It sets out what are considered to be the Council's preferred options for tackling these issues, including the identification of new sites for future development, as well as suggesting reasonable alternatives.

The purpose of the MIR is to focus on what are considered to be the *main issues*, and consequently not all *issues* will be identified at this stage, but will instead be featured when the proposed LDP2 is published. The MIR identifies a background context for each subject and emerging main issues to be addressed. It also sets out a series of questions to be considered for each subject.

The existing LDP requires monitoring which ultimately helps to inform the production of the LDP2. The Monitoring Statement (MS) has been produced alongside the MIR which primarily gives consideration as to how effective planning policies have operated in practice since the LDP was adopted in 2016.

Development of SEA Objectives and Sub-Objectives

In order to make the SEA as efficient and focused as possible, consideration has been given to which of these SEA topics are relevant to the LDP2 MIR content. The following topics have been scoped in;

- Air
- Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna
- Climatic Factors
- Cultural Heritage
- Landscape and Townscape
- Materials Assets
- Population and Human Health
- Soil
- Water

The IER also contains an assessment of any reasonable alternatives identified within the MIR.

The SEA objectives and sub-objectives have been developed taking account of the environmental issues. Identifying objectives is an important part of the SEA process, as it will be these that will be used as the primary tool for testing the new LDP2 MIR, to ensure that it will not result in any significant environmental effects. The objectives and sub-objectives were initially set out within the Scoping Report, however these have been further refined, in response to the Consultation Authority comments.

Site assessment criteria were also produced, for each SEA topic. These were derived from a consideration of relevant plans, policies and strategies (PPS), environmental baseline data, environmental issues and comments received from the Consultation Authorities at the Scoping Report stage.

Environmental Context

This section outlines the environmental baseline data and aims to describe the environmental context within which the LDP2 operates, the constraints and targets that this context imposes upon it. **Appendix 3** provides a description of the current state of the environment (the environmental baseline) for the Scottish Borders area and how this might change in the future in the absence of the LDP2, as well as the environmental characteristics of the area. The identification of relevant baseline information provides an opportunity to identify any existing environmental issues/problems across the SEA topics.

In order to be able to assess the potential environmental impacts of the LDP2 MIR, it is necessary to understand the current environmental status and trends within the Scottish Borders. This section provides a summary of the key environmental problems/issues, indicator, data source and the implications for the LDP2. Furthermore, the section also outlines the likely evolution of the environment without the LDP2 MIR for each SEA topic.

Methodology: Assessment Framework

This section of the IER sets out the methodology developed to assess the likely significant effects on the environment as a result of implementing the LDP2. This includes;

- Assessment of the vision and aims for the LDP2
- Assessment of the MIR '*main issues*' (preferred and alternative options)
- Assessment of the preferred and alternative sites contained within the MIR
- Area site assessment, including the cumulative effect of the proposals contained within the MIR
- Policy Assessment (existing and proposed)

It should be noted that the overall settlement strategy, many of the policies and proposals included within the current LDP will be rolled forward into the LDP2, either unchanged or with minor modifications.

This section provides the key findings and conclusions for each of the assessments. The following appendices contain the background context and assessment findings;

- **Appendix 4** contains the area site assessments, which takes into consideration any cumulative effects of the proposals
- **Appendix 6** contains the SEA assessment for all the preferred and alternative sites contained within the MIR
- **Appendix 8** contains the SEA assessment for the vision, aims and MIR '*main issues*'
- **Appendix 9** contains the SEA policy assessment, including the existing and proposed policies.

Introduction: Purpose and Statutory Requirement

Overview of the SEA

The Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, as amended by the Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006, requires Scottish Borders Council to prepare a Local Development Plan (LDP), these must be updated every 5 years. The second Local Development Plan (LDP2) for the Scottish Borders will set out detailed proposals and policies to guide development and decision making in planning applications. LDPs fall within the scope of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 (The Act). The SEA is a systematic tool for considering the likely significant environmental effects of PPS. The preparation of the LDP2 has been informed by a SEA, contained within this IER. The IER constitutes the SEA assessment of the new LDP2 MIR and relates solely to the '*main issues*' stage in the preparation of the LDP2.

The purpose of this IER is to identify and record the likely significant effects of implementing the LDP2 MIR. The SEA considers how environmental impacts can be avoided, reduced, mitigated, or in the case of positive effects, enhanced. It concentrates on the elements that are likely to result in significant environmental effects, either directly or indirectly. The SEA aims to:

- Integrate environmental factors into the PPS preparation and decision making
- Improve PPS and enhance environmental protection
- Increase public participation in decision making and
- Facilitate openness and transparency in decision making.

This IER provides the findings from the environmental assessment of the MIR. The IER will be updated at the Proposed Plan stage. The IER is a key consultation document and will be published alongside the MIR and Monitoring Statement (MS). It will be reviewed at the Proposed Plan stage and any changes arising from the Reporter's findings following the Examination process will also be updated.

Stages involved in the Environmental Report process

The following stages are involved in producing the final ER. The first stage is the production of a Scoping Report, followed by the IER, 12 week consultation, Post Adoption Statement and finally monitoring. The IER will be updated at the Proposed Plan stage, where a finalised Environment Report will be presented alongside the Proposed Plan.

Scoping: The Scoping Report was prepared and submitted to the Consultation Authorities (Scottish Natural Heritage, Scottish Environment Protection Agency and Historic Environment Scotland) via the Gateway on the 25th May 2018. The Scoping Report set out the following:

- Objectives and contents of LDP2 (MIR)
- Relevant Plans, Programmes and Strategies
- Summary of the likely changes to the environment, in the absence of the LDP2
- Summary of environmental problems/issues
- Environmental baseline relevant to LDP2
- Scope and level of detail to be included within the SEA
- SEA environmental objectives

The Scoping Report identified the relevant aspects of the environment to be considered further in the SEA process, and associated environmental problems that would need to be taken into account when developing the plan or policy. The Consultation Authority responses have assisted in informing the approach and methodology adopted within this IER, as set out in **Appendix 1**.

Interim Environmental Report: This IER contains the SEA of the new LDP MIR. The purpose of the IER is to identify, describe and evaluate the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the proposed LDP2 and to compare these with implanting other reasonable alternatives.

Consultation: The IER will be presented for public and statutory consultation during the same period as the MIR. The consultation period will be for 12 weeks.

Finalised Environmental Report: The finalised Environment Report will be produced at the Proposed Plan stage. This will be updated to reflect the final content of the Proposed LDP2.

Post Adoption Statement: Provides information on the final adopted LDP2 and how consultation comments have been taken into account. This will be undertaken and published following the adoption of the LDP2.

Monitoring: Section 19 of the SEA Act requires the Responsible Authority to monitor significant environmental effects of implementing the PPS. This must be done in such a way as to also identify unforeseen adverse effects and to take appropriate remedial action.

SEA Report Key Facts

Responsible Authority	Scottish Borders Council
Title of Plans/Programme	Scottish Borders Council Local Development Plan 2 (Main Issues Report)
What prompted the plan?	The Scottish Borders Council Local Development Plan (LDP) was adopted in 2016. That plan must be reviewed and replaced every 5 years, from its adoption date, as set out within the Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006.
Plan subject	Local Development Plan 2 (Land Use Planning)
Period covered by the plan	2021-2026 Must cover 10 years from the date of adoption (anticipated Spring 2021)
Frequency of plan updates	5 years
Plan area	Scottish Borders Council Local Authority area
Purpose of the plan/plan objectives	The LDP2 will set out a clear spatial strategy for the Scottish Borders, allocate land to meet the needs and targets set out within the Strategic Development Plan (SDP2) and provide a clear basis for determining planning applications.
Contact point	Planning Policy and Access Team Regulatory Services Council HQ Newtown St Boswells Melrose TD6 0SA Tel: 01835 Email: localplan@scotborders.gov.uk

Planning Context: LDP MIR

Local Development Plan 2 Overview and Context

The Scottish Borders Development Plan currently comprises of the Strategic Development Plan (SDP) 2013 and the Local Development Plan (LDP) 2015. The SDP is the high level strategic plan for the City of Edinburgh and the South East of Scotland (SESplan) which sets out a range of strategic planning issues which the LDP must address. The LDP sets out the Councils strategy, policies and proposals for the use of land and buildings and is the document used to determine planning applications and provide advice on development proposals. **Figure 1** below outlines where in the LDP2 process, Scottish Borders Council currently are. The process and timescale for the preparation and adoption of LDP2 is contained within the Development Plan Scheme. The first stage in the LDP2 process is the preparation of the MIR, IER and a Monitoring Report.

Figure 1: Where are we in the LDP2 process?



Main Issues Report and Monitoring

The MIR is a forerunner to the Council's forthcoming LDP2. It seeks to encourage public engagement and comment on a wide range of matters. It identifies key development and land use issues which the LDP2 must address, setting out what are considered to be the Council's preferred

options for tackling these issues, including the identification of new sites for future development as well as suggesting reasonable alternatives. The purpose of the MIR is to focus on what are considered to be the *main issues*, and consequently not all *issues* will be identified at this stage, but will instead be featured when the proposed LDP2 is published. The MIR identifies a background context for each subject and emerging main issues to be addressed. It also sets out a series of questions to be considered for each subject.

The existing LDP requires monitoring which ultimately helps to inform the production of the LDP2. The MS has been produced alongside the MIR which primarily gives consideration as to how effective planning policies have operated in practice since the LDP was adopted in 2016. It must also take account of other emerging material matters. As set out within Circular (6/2013), evidence is required to inform plan-making, justify the plan's content and provide a baseline for later monitoring. The MS examines a range of subjects and gives an evaluation on the progress of the policies and proposals within the current LDP. It highlights how the Plan has encompassed new guidance and requirements from local and national level and considers decisions on planning applications. This is a useful gauge as to how policies are operating in practice. The MS also identifies policy areas where further work needs to be carried out. The MS will be useful to a range of other interested parties, agencies and the general public, as well as to the Council in implementing its statutory duties. It is particularly important in relation to the procedures for preparing the new LDP2, which requires up to date monitoring of policy performance and the identification of where policy needs amendments. It is also a vehicle for monitoring SEA baseline standards and data.

The MIR draws together the findings of a number of activities undertaken by the Council in the last year. This has included a Call for Sites seeking the submission of potential development sites for a variety of uses, a number of public events and workshops to discuss the purpose of the MIR, the consideration of third party representations, consultations with other Council services, statutory bodies and a series of working groups to discuss the many matters to be addressed. These activities are illustrated in **Figure 2**.

The MIR identifies a number of main issues that will be considered, including;

- Economic development
- Retail
- Supporting our town centres
- Regeneration
- Housing
- Climate change
- Renewable energy

- Policy updates

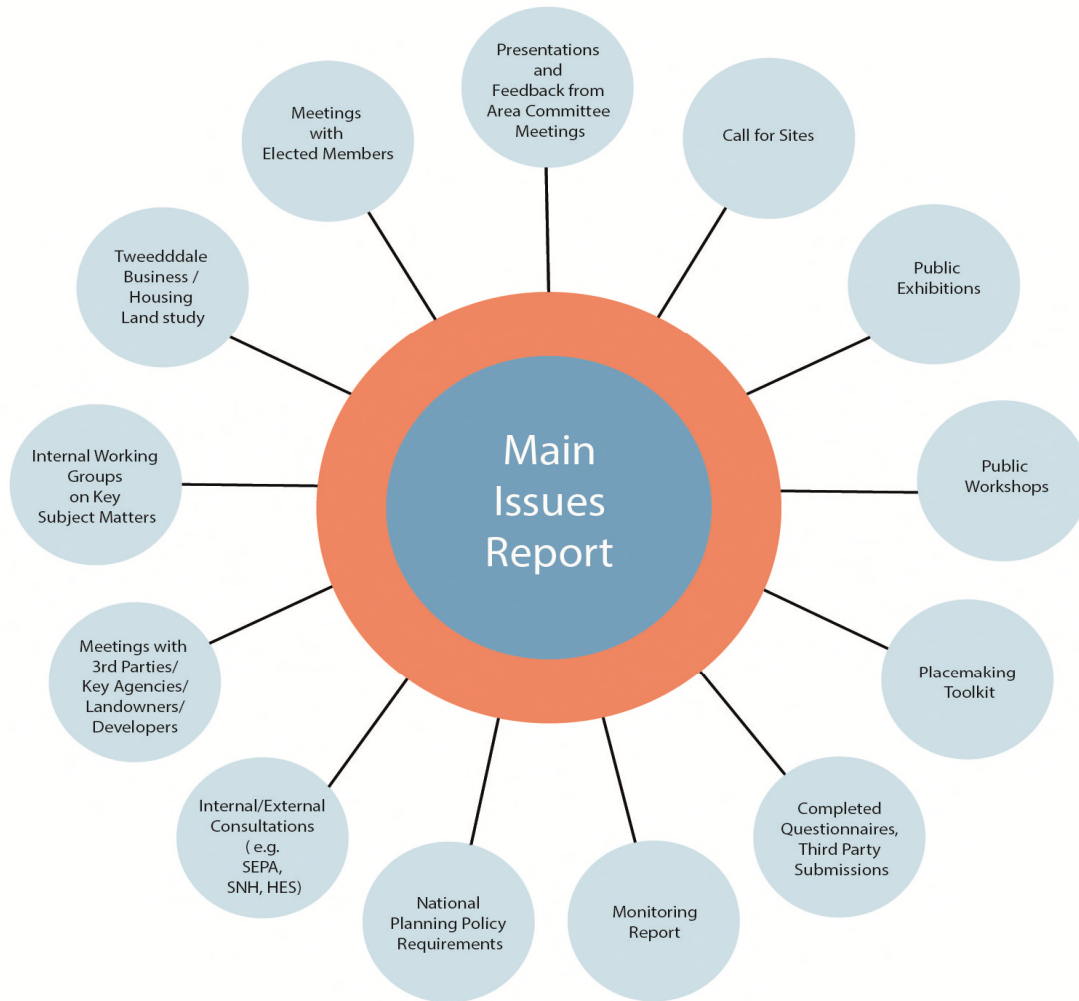
The MIR is supported by the following background papers. Although these are not consultation papers as part of the MIR;

- Monitoring Statement
- Housing Technical Note
- Town Centre Core Activity Area Pilot Scheme
- Western Growth Area: Development Options Study
- Interim Environmental Report

The MIR has been prepared in parallel with these supporting documents. The LDP2 will incorporate finalised versions of these documents, where required, and will be accompanied by an Action Programme. The Action Programme will set out actions required to ensure the delivery of the Plan and will be kept under review and be updated during the Plan period.

There are a number of proposals contained within the MIR, including; housing, business and industrial, mixed use and redevelopment sites. These are set out in locality order; Berwickshire, Cheviot, Eildon, Teviot & Liddesdale and Tweeddale.

Figure 2: Preparation of Main Issues Report



Development of SEA Objectives and Sub-Objectives

Relevant Environmental Topics

Schedule 3 of the Environmental (Scotland) Act 2005 sets out the 12 SEA topics which have to be considered in determining the assessment scope. In order to make the SEA as efficient and focused as possible, consideration has been given to which of these SEA topics are relevant to the LDP2 MIR contents. **Table 1** below sets out the SEA environmental topics which have been scoped in, these were influenced by **Table 4 in Chapter 4** below which outlines the problems/issues. The SEA topics which have been scoped in are considered to be relevant to the LDP2.

Table 1: Scoping of the SEA environmental topics

SEA Environmental Topic	Scoped in	Scoped out
Air	Yes	
Biodiversity, Flora & Fauna	Yes	
Climatic Factors	Yes	
Cultural Heritage	Yes	
Landscape and Townscape	Yes	
Material Assets	Yes	
Population & Human Health	Yes	
Soil	Yes	
Water	Yes	

Reasonable Alternatives

Schedule 3 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005, requires that ‘*reasonable alternatives*’ be considered. The IER has therefore assessed all the reasonable alternatives identified within the MIR. It should be noted that in some cases, no reasonable alternatives have been identified and some are subject to a question within the MIR. Alternative options have been subject to the same assessment as the preferred options in the IER.

SEA Objectives and Sub-Objectives

The SEA objectives and sub-objectives, set out in **Table 2**, have been developed taking account of the environmental problems/issues, contained within **Table 4 of Chapter 4**. Identifying objectives is an important part of the SEA process, as it will be these that will be used as the primary tool for testing the new LDP2 MIR, to ensure that it will not result in any significant environmental effects. The objectives and sub-objectives were initially set out within the Scoping Report, however these have been further refined, in response to the Consultation Authority comments. The SEA objectives are a good way in which the environmental effects can be described, analysed and compared. Identifying SEA objectives is also a useful way of establishing what baseline data needs to be collated.

The final column contains the site assessment criteria for each of the SEA topics. The assessment criteria have been derived from a consideration of relevant PPS, environmental baseline data, environmental issues and the comments received from the Consultation Authorities on the Scoping Report. All of this information was used to formulate the SEA objectives, sub-objectives and site assessment criteria. It is these objectives and criteria which will be used to measure the environmental implications of the MIR and to identify opportunities for the inclusion of mitigation measures.

Table 2: SEA objectives, sub-objectives and site assessment criteria

SEA Issue	SEA Objective	Sub-objectives	Site Assessment Criteria
Air	To protect current air quality and provide opportunities for public transport use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reduce the need to travel; - Promote accessibility by sustainable transport nodes; - Provide for digital connectivity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Access to public transport, access to services / facilities, access to employment
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	To protect and enhance biodiversity and habitats in Borders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Protect/enhance international, national and local conservation areas; - Protect/enhance greenspace; - Protect/enhance Borders green network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SAC, SPA, Ramsar sites, SSSI, International / national designation constraints, adjacent to River Tweed - NNR - Ancient Woodland Inventory - TPO

Climatic Factors	To reduce greenhouse gas emissions, reduce energy consumption and promote climate change adaptation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promote use of renewable energy, where appropriate; - Consider impacts of climate change on the water resource 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Site aspect
Cultural Heritage	To safeguard and enhance the built and historic environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Protect designated historic/cultural sites, areas and landscapes; - Provide opportunities for greater access to/understanding of the historic environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SAM - Listed buildings - Conservation area - Garden and designed landscape - Battlefields - Non-designated heritage assets
Landscape and Townscape	To protect and enhance the landscape and townscape in the Borders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monitor relevant supplementary planning guidance designed to protect the Borders landscape 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SLA - NSA - Landscape features constrained in landscape capacity study
Material Assets	To promote the sustainable use of natural resources and increase waste recycling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consider sustainable options for waste treatment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Open space - Access to public transport, access to services / facilities, access to employment - Education provision, ROW, trunk roads, physical access / road capacity - Minerals and coal
Population and Human Health	To improve the quality of life and human health for communities in the Borders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide access to greenspace and to proposed green network; - Provide for digital connectivity; - Provide access to employment and services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Access to public transport, access to services / facilities, access to employment - Education provision, ROW, trunk roads, physical access / road capacity - Access to active travel infrastructure
Soil	To protect the quality of soil in the Borders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Protect soil quality; - Protect the carbon rich soil and peat resource - Address contaminated land 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prime quality agricultural land - ESA - Potential contaminated land
Water	To protect and enhance the quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Protect quality of the River Tweed and other watercourses; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sewerage - Water supply

	of the water environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Identify areas of expansion away from flooding areas;- Provide strategic flooding work	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Flood risk
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Environmental Context

Relationship with other PPS

Schedule 3 (Section 14) of The Act states that the IER should consider the relationship between the LDP MIR and other PPS, which are relevant to the LDP2. **Appendix 2** sets out the PPS which are considered to be relevant to and how they will affect or be affected by LDP2.

Environmental Baseline Data (Current state of the environment)

Schedule 3 of the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005, requires ER's to contain details of *'The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution of thereof without implementation of the plan or programme'*, and *'the environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected'*. This section aims to describe the environmental context within which the LDP2 operates, the constraints and targets that this context imposes upon it. The baseline within **Appendix 3** provides a description of the current state of the environment (the environmental baseline) for the Scottish Borders Council area and how this might change in the future in the absence of the LDP2, as well as the environmental characteristics of the area.

Baseline information has been gathered on aspects of the environment and seeks to provide an overview of the study using information from Scottish Borders Council, as well as national statistics. The aim is to use this information, in order to establish the environmental effects of options, policies and proposals outlined within this IER. **Appendix 3** provides a summary of how the content of the LDPs is affected by or can affect the identified baseline data. The purpose of identifying the environmental issues is to establish how existing problems could affect, or be affected, by LDP2. The baseline data relevant to the SEA is set out within **Appendix 3**.

The identification of relevant baseline information provides an opportunity to identify any existing environmental issues/problems across the SEA topics. Identification of these issues/problems provides a baseline against which the environmental performance of the plan can be continually assessed through the monitoring process. The baseline provides an overview of each of the identified environmental issues/problems across each of the SEA topics scoped in to this assessment. The baseline information is presented under each of the SEA topic headings and sets out the SEA objectives and sub-objectives. The following **Table 3** below, indicates the spatial information contained within the baseline information for each SEA topic within **Appendix 3**.

Table 3: SEA Topic and relevant baseline information

SEA Topic	Corresponding spatial baseline information
Air	Scottish Borders Greenhouse gas emissions, method of travel to work/study, daily traffic flow
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	Land cover map (2000) showing classification of land type, hierarchy of habitat and species designation, SSSI, SAC, SPA, NNR, Ramsar Sites, Ancient Woodland Inventory, Green Networks
Climatic Factors	Location of operational and consented windfarms
Cultural Heritage	Listed buildings, Conservation Areas, Scheduled Monuments, Historic Environment Records, Gardens & Designed Landscapes, Battlefields
Landscape and Townscape	NSA, SLA, Wild Land, Scottish Borders Landscape Character Assessment, Countryside Around Towns
Material Assets	Strategic Road Network, Rail Network, National Cycle Network, Waste Recycling Centres, Consented Mineral Operations, Waste and Civic Amenity Facilities
Population and Human Health	Scottish Borders Population, Drivetime to petrol stations, drivetime to convenience/general stores, Affordable Housing Stock, Core Paths, Strategic Green Networks, Key Green Spaces, Key Green Spaces around selected towns
Soil	Vacant and derelict land, urban capacity results, Soil types, Prime Quality Agricultural land
Water	Status of waters in Solway Tweed River Basin District, Water Quality objectives, River Flood Risk, Surface Water Flood Risk

Summary of Environmental Problems/Issues and Implications for LDP2

In order to be able to assess the potential environmental impacts of the LDP MIR, it is necessary to understand the current environmental status and trends within the Scottish Borders. **Table 4** below provides a summary of the key environmental problems/issues, indicator, data source and the implications for the LDP2. However, it is considered that these environmental issues are not an exhaustive list. These issues were used to influence the scope and selection of the SEA objectives for the MIR SEA, as set out previously.

Table 4: Summary of problems/issues, indicator, data source and implications for LDP2

SEA Topic	Problem/Issue	Indicator	Data Source/Monitoring	Implications for LDP2
Air	Air quality in the Scottish Borders is generally good High dependency on the private car	Levels of emissions	AQMA: In the Scottish Borders there are no AQMA's, nor areas close to a designation Greenhouse Gas Emissions Method of Travel to Work/Study Day Traffic Flow at Monitoring sites	The LDP2 must aim to reduce the impact of new development on air quality through the siting of new development in areas that can encourage the use of sustainable transport modes such as walking, cycling and public transport. Furthermore, the LDP2 will consider opportunities to reduce the impacts that could be achieved by reducing the need to travel.
Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna	Loss of habitat or habitat connectivity	Number of protected sites affected by LDP2 proposals	Land cover in the Scottish Borders SSSI, SAC, SPA, Ramsar Sites Habitat Survey Ancient Woodland Inventory	The LDP2 should ensure that adverse effects on biodiversity and nature conservation are avoided by locating new development from sensitive receptors. Adhere to Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) findings.
Climatic Factors	High demand of energy usage	Predicted levels of Greenhouse Gas Emissions	Ecological footprint Greenhouse gases footprint Operational and consented windfarms	The LDP2 can promote more sustainable forms of development particularly through the siting of new development sites that benefit solar gain allowing for the potential to contribute to efforts

				to reduce Greenhouse gases.
Cultural Heritage	Development could result in the damage or loss of cultural heritage assets/historic settlement pattern	Number of cultural heritage assets affected by LDP2 proposals	Listed buildings Conservation areas Scheduled Monuments Historic Environment Records Gardens and Designed Landscapes Battlefields	The LDP2 has the potential to enhance the Scottish Borders cultural heritage by appropriate siting and design. The LDP2 should aim to protect the historic environment.
Landscape and Townscape	Impact on landscape around settlements	Number of landscape conservation sites affected by the LDP2 proposals	Special Landscape Areas National Scenic Areas Borders Landscape Character Assessment	The LDP2 should protect the landscape and townscape of the Scottish Borders from new development that would detract from our townscape and landscape.
Material Assets	Development could impact on mineral deposits	The proportion of recycled materials used in the construction	Strategic Roads Rail Network National Cycle Network Waste Data Mineral Operations in the Borders	The LDP2 should aim to ensure the minimisation and reuse of aggregates, transport infrastructure and construction waste and disposal.
Population	Increasing numbers of	Access to sustainable	Population breakdown	The LDP2 should seek to make

and Human Health	<p>people in the Scottish Borders towns puts increased demand on the services and facilities.</p> <p>Recreational access to greenspace.</p>	modes of travel	<p>Drive time to petrol stations, convenience stores</p> <p>Core paths</p> <p>Strategic Green Networks</p> <p>Key Greenspaces</p>	maximum benefit of sustainable modes of transport/active travel
Soil	<p>Developments could result in an increase in sealed surfaces and could lead to the loss and deterioration of carbon-rich and peat soils.</p>	Area of land taken up by LDP2 proposals	<p>Brownfield Land</p> <p>Soil Quality</p>	The LDP2 should maximise reuse of brownfield land
Water	<p>Surface water run-off has the potential to impact on the water environment.</p> <p>Potential for increased flood risk through new development.</p>	Quality of water courses and impact on areas prone to flood risk.	<p>Quality of the water environment</p> <p>Flooding</p>	The LDP2 should address concerns relating to potential for impact on water quality and increased flood risk.

Likely evolution of the Environment without LDP2 (MIR)

As outlined above, it is a statutory requirement to update Local Development Plans every 5 years, therefore failure to do so, would result in non-compliance with statutory requirements. Furthermore the policy direction necessary to help the Scottish Borders contribute towards

national environmental improvement targets would be lost. This may not affect the attainment of national targets but it would have the potential to undermine strategic action, as the policy co-ordination would be lost. Possible changes without the LDP2 are outlined below, for each of the SEA topics;

- **Air:** A degradation of air quality in the Borders
- **Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna:** Potential loss of habitat and long term disturbance of important species; Potential loss of biodiversity networks and wildlife corridors
- **Climate Factors:** The opportunity to reduce the impact of development on the environment will be lost
- **Cultural Heritage:** Development could lead to the degradation/loss of the historic environment
- **Landscape and Townscape:** Development may fail to take the landscape and townscape setting into account adequately
- **Material Assets:** Potential loss of greenspace/woodland
- **Population and Human Health:** Unchecked development result in a lack of appropriate houses and development in the right location
- **Soil:** Unrestricted development could impact on biodiversity; Potential irreversible loss of soil or geodiversity from development
- **Water:** Development could increase in the potential of flood risk; Potential that development could impact on biodiversity and water quality.

Methodology: Assessment Framework

This section sets out the methodology developed to assess the likely effects on the environment as a result of implementing LDP2. This includes;

- Assessment of the vision and aims
- Assessment of the MIR main issues (preferred and alternative options)
- Assessment of the preferred and alternative sites
- Area site assessment, including the cumulative effect of the proposals contained within the MIR
- Policy assessment (existing and proposed)

It should be noted that the settlement strategy, many of the policies and proposals included within the current LDP will be rolled forward into the LDP2, either unchanged or with minor modification. While minor amendments are required in some cases, such as re-wording and re-structuring of policies, these are not considered significant. Such policies are identified within **Appendix 9**.

Assessment & Findings (Vision and Aims)

Appendix 8 contains an assessment of the vision and aims proposed for the LDP2. The Vision is the same as the SESPlan Proposed Plan, while the aims are more specific for the context of the Scottish Borders. As assessment has been undertaken, assessing each of the SEA environmental topics against the vision and aims, to ascertain whether there are any potential significant effects on the environmental objectives. It should be noted that no alternative vision or aims are included within the MIR, however question 1 of the MIR, requests suggestions for any alternatives.

The SEA assessment of the vision and aims concluded that they would have a positive impact on the environmental objectives, these are outlined within **Appendix 8**.

Assessment & Findings (Preferred and Alternative Main Issues)

There are 6 main issues which were assessed as part of the SEA process;

- Growing Our Economy
- Planning for Housing
- Supporting Our Town Centres
- Delivering Sustainability and Climate Change Agenda
- Regeneration
- Settlement Maps

The potential environmental impacts of the ‘*main issues*’ have been assessed against the SEA objectives. The assessment of the main issues along with the findings are contained within **Appendix 8**. However, there are general questions under some of the main issues, where a matrix scoring system was not considered the most appropriate method for assessment. In these instances, a text summary has been provided within **Appendix 8**.

Appendix 8 provides a detailed assessment for each of the preferred and alternative options along with commentary. However, it is also important to look at the cumulative impact of the options on the SEA topics. **Table 5** below shows the preferred and alternative assessments for each of the ‘*main issues*’ against each SEA topic cumulatively. The findings of the assessment of the ‘*main issues*’ are described in more detail below. It should be noted that there are a number of questions posed within the MIR, where no options are put forward. In such instances, any options which come forward through the public consultation and are ultimately included within the Proposed Plan will be subject to a SEA assessment at that stage and included within the Environmental Report.

Table 5: Main Issues (Preferred and Alternative Options)

	Impact on SEA Topic								
	Air	Biodiversity, Flora & Fauna	Climatic Factors	Cultural Heritage	Landscape & Townscape	Material Assets	Population & Human Health	Soil	Water

Preferred Option: Growing Our Economy: Business & Industrial Land Policy ED1	0	0	0	0	+	0	+	0	+
Alternative Option 1: Growing Our Economy: Business & Industrial Land Policy ED1	0	0	0	0	+	0	0	0	+
Alternative Option 2: Growing Out Economy: Business & Industrial Land Policy ED1	0	0	0	0	+	0	+	0	+
Alternative Option 3: Growing Our Economy: Business & Industrial Land Policy ED1	0	0	0	0	+	0	+	0	+
Preferred Option: Planning for Housing: Housing in the Countryside	0	0	0	+	+	+	0	0	0
Alternative Option: Planning for Housing: Housing in the Countryside	-	0	0	+	+	-	0	0	0
Preferred Option: Supporting Our Town Centres: Core Activity Areas	0	0	0	0	+	0	++	0	0
Alternative Option 1: Supporting Our Town Centres: Core Activity Areas	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	0	0
Alternative Option 2: Supporting Our Town Centres: Core Activity Areas	-	0	0	0	0	-	0	0	0
Preferred Option: Regeneration: Redevelopment Sites	0	0	0	+	+	0	+	+	0
Preferred Option: Settlement Maps: Oxnam Settlement Boundary	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Preferred Option: Settlement Maps: Newcastleton Conservation Area	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Air

Generally the assessment above finds that there will be neutral effect on the air SEA topic. However, there are two assessments which conclude a negative effect on the air SEA topic. The alternative option for the housing in the countryside policy allows housing out with building groups, this will increase the number of houses within countryside locations, not necessarily located in sustainable locations.

Therefore, this has the potential to result in increased car movements, which will result in increased omissions into the air. Secondly, the alternative option 2 for the core activity area policy. It is considered that this option would result in the potential loss of services within the town centre, as a result of the removal of the core activity areas. This could result in services becoming more dispersed, requiring more reliance on travel, therefore having a negative effect on air quality. The promotion of mixed use development means that housing and amenities are located closer together which gives rise to potential for more sustainable modes of transport between the two.

[Biodiversity, Flora & Fauna](#)

The assessment above finds that there will be neutral effect on the biodiversity, flora and fauna SEA topic. There are a number of mixed use sites proposed and it is considered that these will lessen the pressure of development on land outwith settlement boundaries which may have biodiversity value/potential.

[Climatic Factors](#)

The assessment above finds that there will be neutral effect on the biodiversity, flora and fauna. There are a number of measures that aim to help reduce the volume of car journeys and the level of emissions they generate.

[Cultural Heritage](#)

Generally the assessment above finds that there will be neutral effect on the cultural heritage SEA topic from the main issues topics. However, there are three assessments which conclude a positive effect on the cultural heritage SEA topic. The preferred and alternative options for the housing in the countryside concluded a positive effect. The preferred option to retain the current policy, includes conversions of buildings to a house, restoration of houses and replacement houses. The conversions part of the policy ensures that conversions are in keeping with the scale and architectural character of the existing building, therefore respecting the existing building and cultural heritage. The policy also includes the restoration of houses and that the siting and design must reflect and respect the historic building pattern and the character of the landscape setting. This ensures that any restorations to properties respect the built and cultural heritage. The policy also includes replacement dwellings and such proposals must respect the historical building patterns and the character of the landscape setting, as well as being in keeping with the existing/original buildings in terms of its scale, form, extent and architectural character. This ensures that replacement houses respect the built and cultural heritage. The alternative option would not alter the sections of the policy in respect of conversions,

restorations or replacement houses, therefore the alternative option would also have a positive effect. Lastly, it is considered that the preferred option of identifying and promoting re-development opportunities across the Borders and for specific sites, brings the change to renovate and bring back into use listed buildings and other culturally important sites.

Landscape & Townscape

Generally the assessment above finds that there will be a positive effect on the landscape and townscape SEA topic, with the remainder having a neutral effect. In respect of the preferred and alternative housing in the countryside approach, it is considered that this brings a positive score to the topic, because a knock-on-effect is that the landscape will benefit from an improved approach to development proposals. The preferred option to retain the core activity area is considered to have a positive effect on the SEA topic, which allows a range of uses and would encourage more diverse uses within the town centres, bringing the opportunity to regenerate or fill vacant and/or derelict units and land. The preferred option for the regeneration policy also concluded a positive effect on the SEA topic, as identifying and promoting redevelopment options across the Borders gives rise to the potential for the townscape, and feasibility the wider landscape, to be improved as a result.

Material Assets

Generally the assessment above finds that there will be neutral effect on the material assets SEA topic. The preferred option for the housing in the countryside policy concluded a positive effect, while three assessments concluded a negative effect. The preferred option for housing in the countryside concluded a positive effect, as it directs housing in the countryside to existing building groups of houses, unless it is for a conversion, restoration, rebuilding or has an economic justification. As a result, additional dwellings are sited near other dwellings and aims to encourage a sustainable pattern of development, in order to support existing services and facilities and to promote sustainable travel patterns. However, the alternative option for the housing in the countryside policy concluded a negative effect, the policy moves away from directing housing towards existing building groups. Therefore, alternative policy is considered to have a negative effect on the material assets as it has the potential to result in an increased number of houses located in areas which are not close to the existing services or facilities. The alternative option 1 and 2 for the core activity areas, concluded a negative effect on the SEA topic. It is considered that the alternative option 1 would result in a reduced core activity area and potential loss of services within the town centre. It is considered that alternative option 2

would also result in the loss of services within the town centre, as a result of the removal of the core activity areas. This could result in services becoming more dispersed, requiring more reliance on travel, therefore having a negative effect.

Population & Human Health

Generally the assessment above finds that there will be a neutral effect on the population and human health SEA topic. However, there was a mixture of positive, significantly positive and negative effects. The preferred option, alternative option 2 and alternative option 3 to the business and industrial land policy concluded a positive effect. The preferred option for the core activity areas policy concluded a significantly positive effect, as this would encourage an increased activity within the town centres, bringing economic and quality of life benefits to Borders residents. In addition town centres are accessible by sustainable transport methods. However, it is considered that the alternative option 1 would result in a reduced core activity area and potential loss of services within the town centres. The preferred option for the regeneration policy concluded a positive effect, stating that it will improve the quality of Borders towns and provide greater choice in terms of housing, business and amenity land, having a positive quality of life change.

Soil

Generally the assessment above finds that there will be a neutral effect on the soil SEA topic, with the exception of the preferred regeneration policy, which concludes a positive effect. It is considered that the redevelopment of existing buildings/brownfield sites would relieve the pressure on greenfield sites for development.

Water

Generally the assessment above finds that there will be a neutral effect on the water SEA topic, with the exception of 4 assessments which concluded positive effects. The preferred option and all alternative options for the business policy concluded a positive effect upon the water SEA topic.

Assessment & Findings (Preferred and Alternative Sites)

PAN 1/2010 states that the Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006 requires planning authorities to set out proposals for where development should and should not occur within LDPs. Proposals should be site-specific, clearly set out on a map base showing the location and intended use of the

proposed site. The site assessment process has been carried out largely in the same format as that of the MIR for LDP1. A simple matrix system considers all of the MIR proposals, under each of the 6 main issue topics, against the SEA topics. It should be noted that where clear preferred and alternative options are proposed, a matrix based scoring system has been used, which identifies whether effects are positive, adverse or neutral. Potential mitigating measures are outlined within the assessments, this demonstrates that if it is considered there are any adverse effects either alone or cumulative then they can be mitigated for.

The assessment process for the LDP2 MIR is set out in the bullet points below:

- **Appendix 4** contains the area site assessments for each settlement. It includes all the preferred and alternative sites, alongside all the existing allocated sites within the LDP and the environmental constraints. There is commentary on each respective settlement assessed. The appendix contains the context of the settlement, constraints and cumulative assessment for each settlement
- **Appendix 5** contains all the full site assessments for the preferred and alternative sites
- **Appendix 6** contains the SEA assessment for the preferred and alternative sites. In addition to the assessment there is also a commentary on each of the sites along with proposed mitigation measures where relevant
- **Appendix 7** contains all the conclusions for the sites considered at the MIR stage and not taken forward.

All the preferred and alternative sites put forward within the MIR have been assessed using the SEA site assessment criteria. In addition to the assessment, there is also a commentary on each of the site along with the proposed mitigation measures where relevant.

It should be noted that as part of the MIR process, all the sites submitted for consideration at the MIR stage have been subject to internal and external consultation and a site assessment undertaken.

Discussion (Preferred and Alternative Sites)

Following on from the SEA contained within **Appendix 6**, each SEA topic is listed below with a summary of the findings, discussion of significant effects found and mitigation measures proposed. It should be noted that this discussion relates to both the preferred and alternative options and this will be updated accordingly at the Proposed Plan stage of the ER.

Air

The assessment has found that almost all the preferred and alternative sites identified as having a neutral or positive effect. This is generally as a result of their potential to minimise emissions from increased car journeys as the sites generally have good access to public and sustainable transport links. It is noted that 5 sites are assessed as having a negative effect. This is generally a result of limited access to services, facilities and employment, which results in a heavy reliance on travelling by car. Furthermore, in respect of BGALA006 the negative effect is a result of an adjacent land use which is the existing Sewage Treatment Works. As a result of existing adjacent land uses, these can directly impact upon the air quality of the site being developed.

Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna

Whilst it is considered that a number of sites will have a neutral effect, the majority of the sites identified as preferred or alternative have been assessed as having a negative effect. This is primarily due to the potential for European Protected Species and/or breeding birds. Furthermore, many of the sites are located within close proximity to the River Tweed SAC and SSSI. It should be noted that a number of mitigation measures have been suggested including the following; assessment of ecology impacts and provision of mitigation as appropriate, protection should be given to existing boundary features and mitigation for breeding birds and mitigation to ensure no significant effect on the River Tweed SAC.

Climatic Factors

The results of the assessment are generally neutral or positive. Positive scores came about due to the number of positive impacts such as reducing development on greenfield sites, access to sustainable transport links or services, and the potential for solar gain to be incorporated into the proposed development. These all can assist in the reduction of carbon emissions. However, there were a number of assessments which concluded a negative effect, which was generally for those more remote sites with poorer access to sustainable transport links or services.

Cultural Heritage

The assessment found that there is generally a neutral or negative effect on the cultural heritage. This is due to potential for impacts upon; archaeology, Battlefields, Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings and Scheduled Monuments. Where such constraints are identified a number of mitigation measures have been suggested, where appropriate.

Landscape and Townscape

A large number of sites scored as having a neutral effect on the landscape and townscape and some had positive effects. However, there were a large number which scored as having a negative effect. This was generally for the following reasons; location within countryside around Towns, National Scenic Area, Special Landscape Area or Designed Landscape. However, it is considered that these negative impacts can be minimised through the mitigation measures as identified within the site requirements. This includes landscaping and structure planting.

Material Assets

Generally, the assessment is neutral, as the level of development is relatively low and it is not considered to be significant. For the most it is considered that the site identified would already be serviced and that additional infrastructure would be minimised. However, some sites have been assessed as negative, this tends to be as a result of the need for upgrades to water treatment works or waste water treatment works are required. In these cases, the requirement for a Drainage Impact Assessment and/or Water Impact Assessment has been requested in the mitigation measures, or the need for adherence to Local Development Plan Policy IS9: Waste Water Treatment Standards and Sustainable Urban Drainage.

Population and Human Health

The findings of the assessment are generally positive or neutral effects. This is largely because the sites identified are considered to be in locations which minimise car journeys and/or can be accessed by public and sustainable transport links. Providing sites for housing, mixed use and redevelopment assists in improving people's quality of life through providing a choice in the location, and in respect to redevelopment sites there is also the potential for improvement/enhancement of the built environment. However there are a number of assessments which conclude a negative effect. In the instances where a negative effect was concluded, this is due to a number of reasons including the location

adjacent to Sewage Treatment Works and lack of accessibility including lack of services/facilities nearby. Such neighbouring land uses has the potential to negatively impact upon individuals within the proposed site.

Soil

The outcomes from the assessment vary between negative, neutral and positive effects. A number of sites were assessed as positive effects given their location within a settlement, or because they are located on brownfield land and their development would allow for clean-up to be undertaken and potential decontamination. However, there are a number of sites that were on greenfield land or located within areas of Prime Quality Agricultural Land and as a result there is the potential for negative impacts to occur. Whilst the overall level of development is not considered to be significant, this issue should still be monitored through the Development Plan process.

Water

The sites assessed are all found to have a neutral or negative impact, this is generally a result of flood risk. It is noted that a particular issue with many of the settlements within the Scottish Borders is that there are rivers running through them. In addition to flood risk, there is also the risk that water quality may be affected during construction. However, it is considered that whilst flood risk is a significant issue, mitigation such as flood risk assessments can assist in designing the proposed development in a way that will negate any negative impacts. It is also noted that existing legislation and policy will also assist in ensuring that the water quality will not be adversely affected as a result of construction.

Assessment & Findings (Existing and Proposed Policies)

PAN 1/2010 states that it is not expected that the MIR will include the wording of all the policies that are likely to appear later in the Proposed Plan. Instead it should;

- Identify the new or changed issues that require a policy response
- Explain the proposed changes to policies or policy areas, without necessarily setting out their detailed wording
- Briefly explain which policies or policy areas are rolling forward unchanged and why, without listing all of the policies in full (as these can be seen in the current adopted plan). This allows parties to comment on continuing policies, for example, to make the case that a policy or policy area should in fact be changed
- Explore the reasonable alternatives to the policies that have been considered during the plan preparation process

- Discuss topics that may be suitable for supplementary guidance that may follow, for example, asking consultees to comment on whether the detailed requirements for the design and layout of housing allocations at a specified area should be set out in supplementary guidance.

While most significant environmental effects will come from the spatial strategy and proposals, the SEA may also need to assess the effects of some policies. If other parts of the plan are predicted to have environmental effects, the SEA could usefully explore the extent to which a policy might help to mitigate them. This stage of the IER process, involves reviewing the existing adopted LDP and focussing on the main areas of change emerging from the policy baseline. The MS contained a policy review table, which was also used to inform this section, Therefore, it is the intention to carry forward those policies, not identified as main issues, into LDP2. In line with PAN 1/2010 an assessment of policies which are rolling forward has been undertaken, this is attached as **Appendix 9**. This assessment is formed through a simple screening exercise, whereby the policies are considered against their impact upon the SEA objectives and are scored. The **Appendix 9** also identifies where there is a policy change and a description of the change. Any new policies proposed for inclusion within the LDP2 are included in a separate table and have been subject to SEA assessment.

It is concluded that policies which are rolling forward unchanged are generally neutral or positive, this is unsurprising given the protective nature of many of the policies. Conversely, there are negative assessments for policies which bring development or traffic generation which may result in the loss of greenfield or increased car use. However, it is necessary to have such policies as they control these damaging developments.

Where there are new policies proposed for inclusion within LDP2, the assessment finds that the change is neutral, positive or significantly positive. It is not considered to be surprising given that in many cases, the policy changes are made to reflect the introduction of policy/legislation and associated objectives.

Cumulative Assessment of the Proposals

Settlements

Cumulative effects can be particularly important within a Development Plan SEA, given the breadth of issues that plans address and their emphasis on providing a spatial vision for an area. **Appendix 4** contains maps for each settlement, where preferred and alternative sites are proposed. The maps show all existing allocated sites, alongside the preferred and alternative options within the MIR and the environmental

constraints. This allows the consideration of a single geographical area and the cumulative assessment of multiple proposals within the one area and whether together is placing too much pressure on the environment to the point that the capacity may be breached. This allows the assessment of the spatial cumulative effects from multiple developments within one settlement.

Further to this, the SEA assessment for the individual sites must be looked at in conjunction with the SEA assessment outcomes for the policies and main issues too. For all of the area settlement assessments, it is not considered that cumulative effects are likely from the development of the proposed site along with the existing allocations within the LDP. It is considered that the constraints identified within the SEA assessment can be mitigated and there is no breaking/tipping point which may be reached by the development of the site(s).

SEA Topics

Although certain SEA topics may not necessary have a negative effect on a policy or specific site, cumulatively when looked at together, there is the possibility that there may be increased pressure upon a specific SEA topic cumulatively, thus creating a potential negative cumulative effect.

There is the possibility of negative cumulative effects upon biodiversity, flora and fauna from a number of developments on the River Tweed SAC. A HRA will be undertaken at the Proposed Plan stage and will take cognisance of this risk and will assess and identify mitigation measures to avoid any likely significant effects (cumulative or otherwise) on the conservation objectives for which the site is designated.

There is also the possibility of cumulative effects on the landscape and townscape, and cultural heritage features of Borders towns, as a result of the development of allocations. If developments are insensitive then there is the potential for cumulative negative effects on the respective settlement as it may adversely affect the townscape and built heritage features (ie listed buildings and conservation areas). Conversely, there is the potential for a cumulative positive effect because if the development is sensitive and improves the townscape and Conservation Area, or brings a listed building back into productive use, or achieves both, of these aims.

There are also the possible significant positive cumulative effects for the population and human health SEA topic through the promotion of additional business and industrial sites, retention of core activity areas, housing sites, mixed use sites, and promotion of allocations close to sustainable transport links and services, which together brings a cumulative positive change on quality of life.

There are positive cumulative effects on air, climatic factors and soil SEA topics, because measures such as promotion of town centres, promotion of allocations within settlement boundaries or on brownfield land, as they combine to help maintain the high standard of air quality and mean less development of land where there may be disturbance of carbon rich soils or loss of prime quality agricultural land. However, some of the alternative options could result in increased traffic movements and ultimately increased omissions.

There are potential cumulative effects on material assets, where some of the alternative options have the potential to result in an increased number of houses located in areas which are not close to existing services or facilities and a greater reliance on travel.

Synergistic Effects

In line with PAN 1/2010 it is recognised that there is the possibility of synergistic effects however due to the positive focus on the environment in the document, these effects are not considered significant.

The Next Steps

The next steps for the SEA process following the publication of the IER will be public consultation for a 12 week period. The Consultation Authorities will also be given the opportunity to provide any comments throughout this process. Any comments received will be reviewed and taken on board, where appropriate, in the production of the Final ER. If any additional sites or proposals are identified/submitted throughout the consultation process and ultimately included within the Proposed Plan, the ER will be updated with the necessary SEA assessment. The Finalised ER will be presented alongside the Proposed Plan.

Future Monitoring

The significant environmental effects of implementing LDP2 must be monitored. The primary purpose of monitoring is to help prevent, reduce and, wherever possible, offset any adverse environmental effects that have been identified in the assessment. It is noted that there is iteration between the Monitoring Report (MR) and the LDP2 MIR. The MR has influenced the SEA and the SEA will influence the MR. In doing this, the actions arising from the SEA can be monitored which helps to improve the Scottish Borders environment, which in turn influences future SEA exercises.