

Dear Planning, Policy and Access Team,

I am writing to ask that the LDP2 process considers the removal of the Croft site on Dingleton Road for consideration in future housing supply.

The Croft site is currently the subject of a planning application that will be resolved in 2019, but it is wholly unsuitable for residential development on the following grounds:

The Croft site is on the lower slopes of the Eildon Hills within a sensitive area including the NSA and ALGV. Adjacent land around (Dingleton Mains) owned by the same developer JS Farming has been rejected for development. The Croft was considered a contained site in the 2006 Local Plan that could fit into the landscape. This needs to be reconsidered. The site is a very sensitive boundary for wildlife and the town. No significant development has taken place on the Eildon slopes and should not take place now. A housing development on this land would undermine the scenic quality of the Eildons which is important for the character of Melrose - and for the Scottish Borders. The Main issues Report states: The Scottish Borders has outstanding scenic qualities within its landscape and planning policy seeks to protect it.

The constraints on the site are significant including flood risk, levels, civil engineering, traffic and ecology. The current application is deficient in many ways. The site is inefficient for the developer. It only becomes efficient if the land adjacent is allocated for development too. This opens the door to sprawl up the Eildon slopes.

The site remained undeveloped for 12 years after inclusion in the Local Development plan. This underscores its inefficiency. As the MIR states - given the limited take up of allocated housing sites and the number of new houses required, it is not anticipated the LDP will require significant new housing sites. The Croft allocation of just 25 houses represents just 0.5% of effective housing land supply. The site could be deallocated without compromising the development needs of the Borders.

The proposal for new housing at Lowood adequately addresses the need for expansion in the area to take account of the Borders Railway, as does the 65 units of unbuilt properties at the Dingleton Hospital site. If housing is needed in the area this site should be completed first before new development takes place to ensure impact on public services and traffic is adequately understood and catered for.

Kind regards,

