

**GORDON AND WESTRUTHER COMMUNITY COUNCIL  
CONSULTATION RESPONSE - MAIN ISSUES REPORT  
JANUARY 31ST 2019**

Gordon and Westruther Community Council considered the Main Issues Report at our January meeting and subsequent to said meeting. We have the following comments to make:

**GORDON AGORD004**

Whilst members of the Community Council understand the requirement to build more houses, the land outlined in the MIR suggests a field with readily identifiable difficulties.

- There is an existing problem with sewerage in the surrounding area given that the current system is already at capacity levels. Overflowing waste flows into neighbouring gardens on an annual basis. We understand that SEPA and Scottish Water have been involved in attempting to solve this problem but the solution has not been successful.
- This is a very damp field and substantial drainage would be required.
- It would be imperative that all hedging and trees are retained and their number enhanced to maintain the rural edge of the village.
- It is considered that the density of housing is too great. This is a village where most houses have a substantial garden. To ensure that Gordon remains an attractive village in which to live, it is important to ensure that all new builds have similar large gardens. Hence it is considered that this field would be appropriate for up to 12 houses.

**WESTRUTHER AWESR002**

- There is a known issue with sewage and waste water in Westruther, regularly resulting in sewage rising in the street drains.
- This field is **outwith** the existing 2016 Local Development Plan, with the exception of a very small area where there is an existing red sandstone barn.
- We disagree with the indicative capacity for 10 houses. Westruther is a village characterised by the space each property has. 10 houses on this site would not be in keeping with the setting.
- It would be imperative that all hedging and trees are retained and their number enhanced to maintain the rural edge of the village.
- Westruther is not in a Rural Growth Area.
- Westruther has no public transport, situated some 7 miles from Lauder and 11 from Duns.
- Westruther has no shop.
- The Local Housing Strategy has not shown a local need.
- There is currently a field with outline planning for 6 houses on the east side of the village. This was consented over four years ago and the houses have still not been built. This field was included in the village boundary for the first time in 2016. Unless that field is developed, it would appear there is no requirement for more housing in the village.

- The Reasons for Refusal of application 07/01957/OUT makes the following points, which we strongly believe are still relevant:

The proposed development is contrary to Policy G8 of the Scottish Borders Local Plan. Finalised December 2005 in that the application site lies outwith the Development Boundary of Westruther and would be in conflict with criteria 5,7 and 8 of that policy in that:

- the form and layout of the proposed development does constitutes a logical or appropriate extension to the village
- it would result in a detrimental visual impact on the character and landscape setting of this part of the village
- Further, it is judged that the need for this level of provision for affordable housing has not been adequately demonstrated and that the access is unsuitable for the level of development proposed

We understand that Eildon Housing Association acquired the land in March 2018, and that negotiations have been underway for some time to include this field in the village boundary. The village have not been consulted by the Association.

Gordon and Westruther Community Council believe that whilst there is support for some extra association housing in the village, this site is incapable of accommodating more than 6 houses and that another field already has consent.

**Gordon and Westruther Community Council are concerned that the council has been pressured by a housing association to include this field in the village boundary in order to meet Council, Government and Association targets at the expense not only of our community, but potentially of future residents of any houses built who do not understand quite how remote the village is.**