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Sent: 31 January 2019 20:09

To: localplan <localplan@scotborders.gov.uk>

Subject: Re response to MIR

Please find below some of my thoughts as an individual on some of the topics raised in the MIR consultation:

MIR key development and land use issues:

1 identifying new sites - many of our industrial estates esp Tweedbank are beautifully landscaped but could easily accommodate small clusters of small scale well designed studios with/without accommodation - all using existing infrastructure which is no where near running at full capacity. Might even encourage more people to do a weekly / weekdays commute OUT of Edinburgh.

2 Several flood plain sites identified but why not go one further and do as happens on the continent stipulating that developers will only get approval if they design homes with garage/utility at ground level and all living space above? One new development in the middle of Gala close to the rail station features this design.

3 Reduce the visual impact in rural areas of new or expanding building groups - and, where permitted, individual homes - where these will not be screened by trees by insisting that they are painted almost any colour other than white or off white. Where developments creep up hillsides from valley floors, white buildings make our landscapes look dotty. Perhaps and so long as villages do not join up, ribbon development is less visually intrusive and should be encouraged where there is demand for new housing.

MIR key topics:

1 Regenerating town centres - rural towns depend on folk coming into them, usually by car as so little or no public transport. So, rather than trying to emulate urban areas' efforts to reduce car use, perhaps we should ensure there is adequate, short stay (say, max 2 hours), on street parking for local shoppers AND well signed preferably free parking and covered cycle racks a short walk from town centres, esp in towns like Kelso and Melrose that attract lots of visitors - even if that means using some land already earmarked for business/industrial use. Berwick has a time card scheme to deter overnight campers etc.

Acknowledge that retail as it used to be is dead so promote high streets as social hubs SBC should actually be encouraging coffee shops, cafes, dental practices, GP practices, physios etc to locate to high street, and permit more reversion of high street premises to residential.

3 Delivery of infrastructure: SBC's Roads Dept comments on planning applications for industrial development but, to use the Charlesfield biofuel plant as an example, insufficient analysis seems to be made of the impact of frequent long/wide/heavy vehicle loads on our minor road network before planning approval is given. Surely, when SBC is under considerable financial constraints and cant be expected to fix every pothole as it appears, those behind the industrial development should be required to pay an additional fee, particularly as most of these developments only bring a handful of new jobs - if any- to the area, and not the 100s that the bigger Borders towns need.

And/or constrain industrial development to land zoned and serviced for industrial use.

4 Addressing climate change: the Scottish Borders already produces 8-9 times the amount of green electricity that Borders homes need mainly from big visually intrusive wind farms that have destroyed forever large tracts of our wild landscapes such as the Lammermuirs. I would, however, welcome more small scale point of use hydro and solar schemes where these are appropriate and are not visually or audibly intrusive and do not interfere with neighbours' homes or businesses.

Also, as energy efficiency measures are still even more effective at reducing our CO2 emissions than renewable energy schemes, SBC could take the lead in requiring developers to include these in their industrial/commercial/residential projects, and in requiring SBC employees to implement these in their workplaces (schools too).

14 and 15 Scottish Borders National Park: I strongly support the proposal for a National Park in the Southern Borders (SBNP) that encompasses the largest area of four options in the SBNP feasibility study, and is run by a slimline National Park Authority with strong local representation. I believe this proposal may have the most transformational potential for the region and for those who live and work here, enhance and conserve for future generations our rich natural and cultural heritage and could, through wildlife corridors, enhance the biodiversity of the whole of the Borderlands.

The economic impact of a Scottish Borders National Park on the Borders could be substantial (way more than the Tapestry - and at considerably less cost), benefit businesses in all of the region's key sectors - farming, textiles, forestry, and especially tourism. The National Park brand would provide an instant, major and permanent profile-raising boost to increase footfall at all of the Borders attractions (many of them running at nowhere near capacity), and provide real traction for each of the region's other major economic development initiatives - including the Borderlands Growth Deal - to attract inward investment and create jobs.

This is all explained in very considerable detail in the independent feasibility study, and in the SBNP position statement and economic impact analysis.

Thank you

