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# Land north of BCO4B, Cockburnspath Main Issues Report Representation

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# Land north of BCO4B, Cockburnspath

Main Issues Report Representation

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January 2019



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## 1. Introduction

1.1. This representation is put forward by Savills on behalf of ██████████ to bring forward an area of land in Cockburnspath measuring 2.8 ha which is located immediately to the north of the existing allocated housing site, BCO4B. The proposals would be for residential development land within the next Local Development Plan (LDP2).

1.2. The representation is written in response to Question 7 within the Main Issues Report (MIR)- in particular, the land is proposed as an alternative housing site option to those presented in the MIR. It is also a response to Question 9, in that one of our options is for the allocation BCO10B to be deallocated and replaced with our proposal site.

### QUESTION 7

Do you agree with the preferred options for additional housing sites? Do you agree with the alternative options? Do you have other alternative options?

### QUESTION 9

Do you agree with the proposed existing housing allocations to be removed from the LDP? Are there any other sites you suggest should be deallocated?

1.3. The land has not previously been considered for development potential.

1.4. Our opinion is that the land would form an excellent housing allocation option to help serve the growth of Cockburnspath over the expected 10 year LDP2 period. Development of the land would link with the ██████████ plans to reuse the Pathhead Farm steadings for mixed use development such as a local hub. In addition, ██████████ are keen to bring new residents to Cockburnspath to help maintain and bolster the vitality of the settlement and to support local services, particularly Cockburnspath Primary School.

1.5. We include a Location Plan at Appendix 1 and a High-level Development Framework at Appendix 2.

## 2. Site Context

### *Surrounding area*

2.1. The proposed site is located to the north of the allocated site BCO4B and to the south and west of Pathhead House, Pathhead Cottages and Cloverknowe Cottage. The land is currently used for agriculture.

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2.2. To the south of the site there is greenfield ground. There is also a housing development at Ladyhall Road and Tollview which was constructed in the nineties. There is an allocated housing site (BCO4B) surrounding this housing which has planning permission for 45 units (03/01239/FUL). An access road has been constructed which runs north-south, but stops short of our proposal site boundary. No other construction has taken place on this allocated site.

2.3. To the east of the site is Pathhead House which is a large detached private home in third party ownership. Beyond this property is the A1 access road which then connects with the A1 motorway. Also to the east is Pathhead Farm and its farm cottages which are in [REDACTED] ownership. There is then private dwellings beyond the farm buildings.

2.4. To the north and west there is further agricultural land.

2.5. Cockburnspath is a settlement in the far north-east of the Scottish Borders, close to the administrative boundary with East Lothian. The settlement sits adjacent to the A1 motorway, around 9 miles south-east of Dunbar and 15 miles north-west of Eyemouth.

### ***Proposed Development Site***

2.6. As stated the land is currently used for agriculture. The site is predominantly flat with a gentle slope to the north

2.7. Access would be taken from the Edinburgh road to the east, albeit access would also be possible through the allocated site to the south should this be developed. Previously, [REDACTED] have discussed stopping up two accesses that lead to Pathhead Farm and Pathhead house respectively, and then having one access to the south (the proposed access point). We consider that this option is viable to service the proposed housing site also (please see Figure 1, High level Development Framework).

2.8. The land is south facing and there are long views to the sea to the north.

2.9. A farm track runs north-south on the western boundary, this track connects to the playing field, play park and Cockburnspath Primary School in the village.

### 3. Planning Context

#### ***Scottish Planning Policy (SPP)***

3.1. One of the principles of Scottish Planning Policy is that “the right development should be directed to the right place”. The proposed development site is located adjacent to the existing northern settlement boundary of, Cockburnspath. The LDP settlement profile states that Cockburnspath is proposed to grow in a northern direction, and so the prospective allocation is located in the “right” place.

3.2. SPP also supports the six principles of successful places. Development that is: safe and pleasant, welcoming, adaptable, resource efficient and easy to move around and beyond. Within this Supporting Statement we outline how the proposal site meets these principles.

#### ***Proposed SESplan 2***

3.3. The SESplan 2 proposed plan outlines that strategic growth in the south-east will be directed to locations further east along “Long Term Growth Corridors”. Indeed a new settlement is mentioned as a possibility in the east of East Lothian. Figure 3.2 “*South East*” shows that there is expected to be “strategic growth” in the immediate period 2018-2030.

3.4. Cockburnspath is in close proximity to the A1 and to Dunbar. We consider that the proposal site is located in good proximity to Dunbar railway station (15 minute drive/bus), enabling sustainable travel. Development at Cockburnspath can therefore help contribute to the desired strategic growth in the south-east.

3.5. The final adoption of SESplan 2 is awaited, however it is understood that further housing land is required within the Edinburgh city region. The proposal site provides a realistic option to help provide for housing land to support the city region’s growth.

#### ***Local Development Plan***

3.6. The settlement profile for Cockburnspath contains placemaking considerations. Of relevance is the fact that the settlement has expanded northwards in the last 20-30 years. However, it is also stated that the settlement has two existing housing allocations that have not been developed, and this is a critical point in this submission for an alternative/additional housing proposal.

3.7. Future development in, Cockburnspath is preferred “*between the development boundary and Pathhead House to the north*”. This includes the majority of the site proposed in this submission.

3.8. Key outcome 1 of the current Local Development Plan seeks “The continued provision of an effective housing land supply to ensure that a generous housing land supply is maintained”. The identification of the proposal site would help LDP 2 to plan strategically for the long-term growth of Cockburnspath. It would also channel development in the most logical direction, as previously outlined.

3.9. Identification of the land would also support Key outcome 2 which states that there should be “encouragement of opportunities for affordable housing”. It would be expected that prospective development would contribute a proportion of affordable housing, most likely to a level of 25%. ██████████ are already progressing an affordable housing proposal with Berwickshire Housing Association for a site adjacent to Hoprig Road.

3.10. We also believe that the land is in line with Key Outcome 9 which states that development should be directed to sustainable locations. The land has no particular natural or built environment constraint, it is located within walking distance of the highly valued local school, sport, village shop and hall facilities. Support for these facilities is vital to their survival. ██████████ are also keen to consider further services, for example a local hub located at Pathhead Farm.

3.11. The site is also close to Dunbar where further key services and amenities are located and there is excellent existing transport links on the A1 to Dunbar and the rail station and to the potential Reston rail halt.

3.12. Prospective development in due course would be in line with the policies of the relevant development plan. As shown in the site context map initial placemaking considerations have already been made.

## 4. Strategic development at Cockburnspath

4.1. It is expected that the allocation of Land north of BCO4B will be seen as premature, given that there are two allocated sites in Cockburnspath. However, our counter argument is that allocation of a further site will actually help provide delivery of housing in Cockburnspath, and assist the Borders to meet their housing land supply targets.

4.2. The current situation is that the allocated site BCO10B achieved planning consent for 28 dwellings in 2006 now 13 years ago and it is assumed that this consent lapsed in 2011. It appears there has been no progress on this site since. Matters are more severe at the other allocated site, BCO4B where consent was issued for 45 dwellings in 2005. Since this time two AMSC applications have been submitted to modify the approved layout and an access road has been constructed. No houses have been built.

4.3. [REDACTED] are in discussions with Berwickshire Housing Association (BHA) about a housing development for two phases of 8 units (16 affordable houses total) on land adjacent to the settlement boundary at Hoprig Road. In addition, the [REDACTED] also propose a small amendment to the settlement boundary to the south of the prospective affordable housing site which would likely cater for 3 or 4 self-build plots (see separate submission).

4.4. Should BHA secure consent they will likely commence development in the currency of the current Local Development Plan. It is also reasonable to assume that self-build plots will also come forward, should they receive planning consent. Overall therefore, the [REDACTED] are active in considering development at Cockburnspath in different housing delivery types, and an effective market value allocation is therefore seen to be part of this mix.

4.5. [REDACTED] are aware that local services in Cockburnspath are struggling. In 2015, Cockburnspath Primary School had a roll of 35 pupils. There is understandable local concern that the School will come under threat in due course if no new housing is built.

4.6. Other facilities within Cockburnspath, including the local shop, village hall and Bowling Club could also struggle in the future without new residents to support them, particularly in the context of an ageing population (para 2.3 MIR).

4.7. [REDACTED] proposal is for the LDP review to consider the addition of a further allocation at Land North of BCO4B to attempt to stimulate house building in the settlement. We consider two options below:

### **1. Addition of Land North of BCO4B to form third housing allocation**

- Our opinion is that a third housing allocation in Cockburnspath will bring competition and fresh impetus to the delivery of housing for Cockburnspath. Clearly the allocated sites have, as yet, failed to deliver any housing, and this has occurred over a sustained period of time and multiple development plan periods.
- The introduction of the proposal site allows for a further party to bring forward much needed housing to sustain the settlement and hopefully bring new inward investment. This would also be in-line with the Council's desired direction of development, as explicitly stated in the current LDP settlement profile.
- There is also the possibility that the addition of the land north of BCO4B will mean that housing could be delivered in conjunction with the BCO4B site should it come forward. A larger housing allocation may attract a volume housing builder, because a higher number of units will mean that delivery of the site is in line with their requirements.
- It is anticipated that the SBC LDP 2 will be a 10 year plan and so a higher number of housing units would not bring undue pressure on Cockburnspath because delivery would be spread over the full currency of the development plan.



### 2. Substitution of BCO10B with new allocation at Land north of BCO4B (deallocation of BCO10B)

- If the Council were of the opinion that three allocations would result in too much development pressure, then we consider that it is reasonable to suggest that BCO10B should be deallocated and replaced with Land north of BCO4B.
- It is clear to [REDACTED] that, Cockburnspath requires housing delivery to sustain the village. It is reasonable to state that BCO10B has not delivered over multiple development plan periods and as a result it cannot be argued to be effective (as per PAN 2/2010 and SPP) and so should be deallocated to allow other development sites to come forward. A site should not be allowed to sit in a development plan to the detriment of the vitality of the settlement, particularly when other parties are keen to bring forward housing land. It is our opinion that BCO10B has had a sustained chance to deliver and has failed. To quote SPP, para 123:

*“Planning authorities should actively manage the housing land supply. They should work with housing and infrastructure providers to prepare an annual housing land audit as a tool to critically review and monitor the availability of effective housing land, the progress of sites through the planning process, and housing completions, to ensure a generous supply of land for house building is maintained and there is always enough effective land for at least five years. A site is only considered effective where it can be demonstrated that within five years it will be free of constraints<sup>52</sup> and can be developed for housing.”*

- The Council are keen to see development move in a northward direction, and so our opinion is that the combination of BCO4B and Land north of BCO4B brings the best option for the future growth of Cockburnspath. The sites have the potential to be delivered together (subject to agreement with the adjacent landowner or separately).

## 5. Site Effectiveness and Deliverability

5.1. It is critical that housing allocations are effective and can be delivered within the currency of LDP2. This is required by SPP and SESplan.

5.2. To analyse effectiveness of housing sites Planning Advice Note (PAN) 2/210 ‘Affordable Housing and Housing Land Audits’ is used, in particular the criteria outlined at paragraph 55.

5.3. Regarding the existing allocated sites in Cockburnspath is that clearly the length of time that they have been allocated, without any housing being built, is clear evidence that their effectiveness is surely in question. [REDACTED] is, however, willing to work with the owners of BCO4B to increase the likelihood of housing coming forward at both locations.

5.4. In relation to the proposal site, we have considered site effectiveness below:

- [REDACTED] are willing to investigate how to bring the site forward for development and will engage with the development industry to assess interest. The [REDACTED] are willing to commit to update SBC in advance of the publication of the PLDP. There is also the potential to engage with the owner to the south, as previously stated.
- The site is free from physical constraints. Access can be achieved onto the A1 access road.
- There is no known contamination present on this site
- The site is marketable- [REDACTED] would be willing to assess developer interest as mentioned.
- Infrastructure is available in immediate proximity to the site. It is understood that there is both water and waste water capacity, power, and telecoms; and
- Housing is the sole preferred use of the site therefore the delivery of the site is not dependent upon cross-funding activities

5.5. In relation to the marketability of the site, the scale proposed should make this site more economic to deliver and therefore more attractive to a housebuilder. This will be complemented by the self-build opportunities in our other submission at Hoprig Road. Again, we can update SBC with progress in the coming months.

## 6. Constraints Analysis

6.1. We have reviewed relevant online constraints mapping and we are confident that there are no constraints that would preclude development at the site. In particular:

- There is no flood risk on site
- There are no nature designations on site and no obvious links to any nearby designations
- There are no cultural heritage designations that would be affected by development
- There are no coal authority/groundwork issues
- There is no known contamination of the site

## 7. Placemaking Considerations and Development Proposals

7.1. The High-level development framework drawing at Figure 1, below provides an outline of the key placemaking considerations in relation to the overall development of the site. We have also provided this at drawing at Appendix 2.

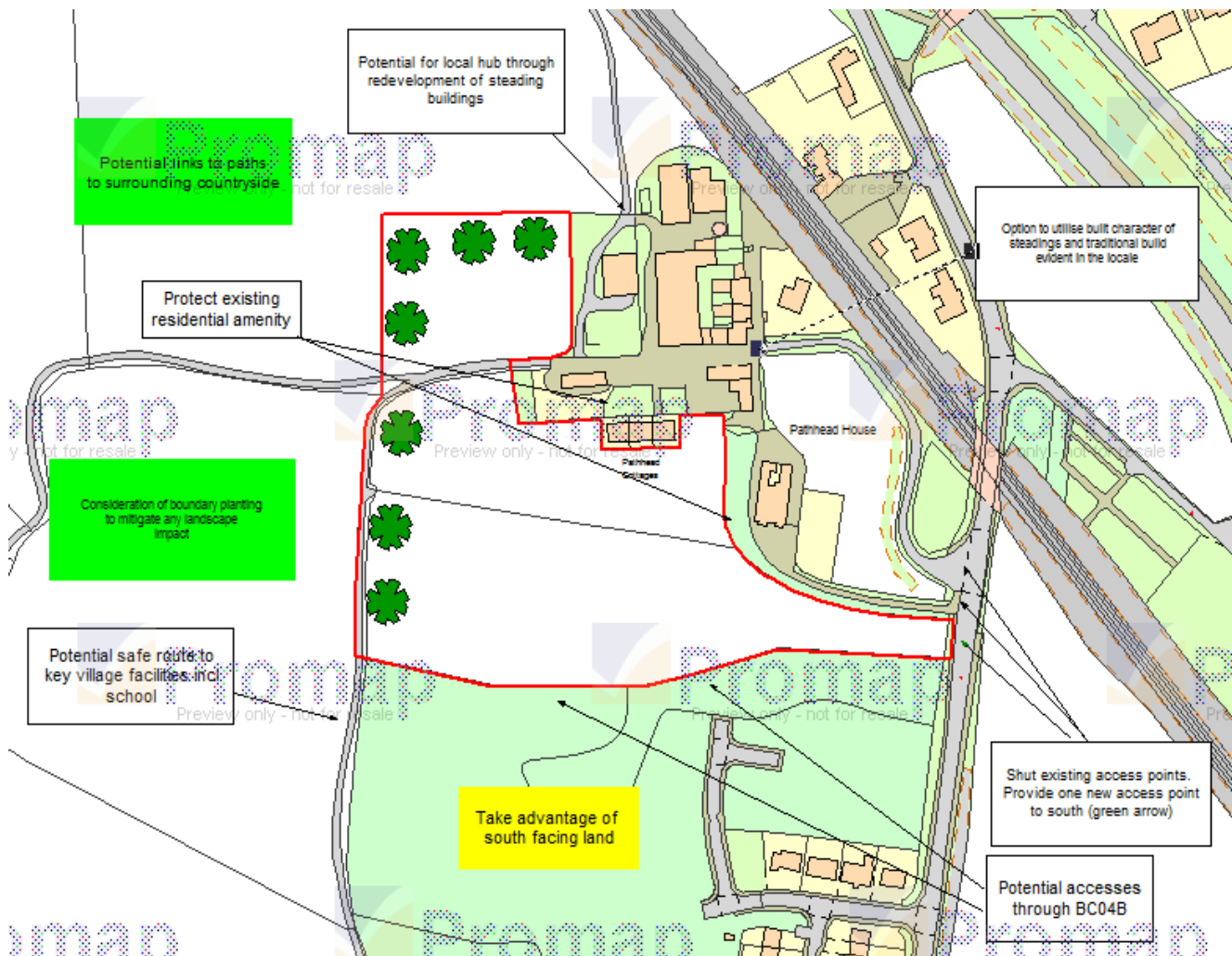


Figure 1: High-level Development Framework

# Land north of BCO4B, Cockburnspath

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7.2. The Scottish Borders outline their placemaking and urban design criteria within policy PMD2: 'Quality Standards' and the associated Placemaking and Design Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG).

7.3. Our opinion is that the proposal site is in line with these policy considerations and we provide our analysis below:

Placemaking/design Consideration	Commentary
Sustainability	<p>We have outlined that the proposal site is in close proximity to Dunbar and the rail station. In addition, it is likely that future housing will have EV charging capability, and so travel from the site will become more sustainable.</p> <p>The land is south facing and so property orientation can take advantage of solar gain. Provision of solar panels would allow for housing to meet the requisite SAP calculations for building standards.</p> <p>Although the land is prime agricultural land, it comprises an awkward shape and so there is a minimal net loss of productive agricultural land.</p> <p>There is land available for consideration of- landscape mitigation, SUDs, waste/recycling storage and digital connectivity infrastructure.</p>
Placemaking and Design	<p>In considering "10-49 houses on or near the settlement edge" the SPG outlines that proposals must demonstrate an understanding of landform and views within the wider context; the settlement pattern; how urban forms can incorporate local character; and appropriate access and infrastructure provision.</p> <p>As stated, development in this location is in line with the development strategy for Cockburnspath as outlined in the current LDP settlement profile. There is no Special Landscape Area designation and the land is not prominent in any particular views to or from the settlement.</p> <p>We are of the opinion that key infrastructure is available in close proximity to the site.</p> <p>In due course, we anticipate that the built form would benefit from detailed consideration in the form of a masterplan or development brief. This brief could incorporate the farm steading buildings, which it is hoped can be redeveloped- the brief would incorporate consideration of local views; good examples of local built character; landscape design; connections; open space and green network provision; and the key elements of successful places as outlined in current national, strategic and local planning policy.</p>
Accessibility	<p>There are multiple appropriate access points for vehicles and it is considered that buses could also access the site, or a stop could be provided on the A1 access road.</p> <p>Active travel routes can also be provided off the main road, by taking advantage of the track that runs north-south to the west of the site. This will allow for safe pedestrian and cycle access into the heart of the village, in particular to allow school children to access the Primary School and play facilities.</p>



Greenspace, Open Space and Biodiversity	There is land available to create meaningful open space for prospective residents, and this open space could connect into active travel links running through the site and on to the surrounding countryside and the heart of the village.
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Table 1: Placemaking and Design Considerations

## 8. Conclusions

8.1. [REDACTED] are keen to promote the growth of Cockburnspath and to attract new residents who will in-turn bolster key local services and help sustain the vitality of the settlement.

8.2. This representation puts forward a new proposed housing allocation either in addition to the two existing housing allocations, or as a replacement site for BCO10B. Our assertion is that the LDP review process must take a bold approach to ensure that housing sites are effective and can actually deliver housing. In our opinion, Cockburnspath is now at a critical juncture in that housing must be delivered or the settlement's facilities will suffer as a result. It is plainly clear that the existing allocations have not delivered despite ample time to do so.

8.3. This Supporting Statement has shown that the proposal site is in line with the development strategy for Cockburnspath and brings excellent potential for a new housing development on the edge of Cockburnspath. In particular, there is potential to take advantage of active travel routes, to link with the redevelopment of Pathhead Farm, to take advantage of a south facing site, and, most importantly, to introduce competition to the development land process at Cockburnspath.

8.4. Our client would be very happy to engage with Scottish Borders Council through the LDP review process.

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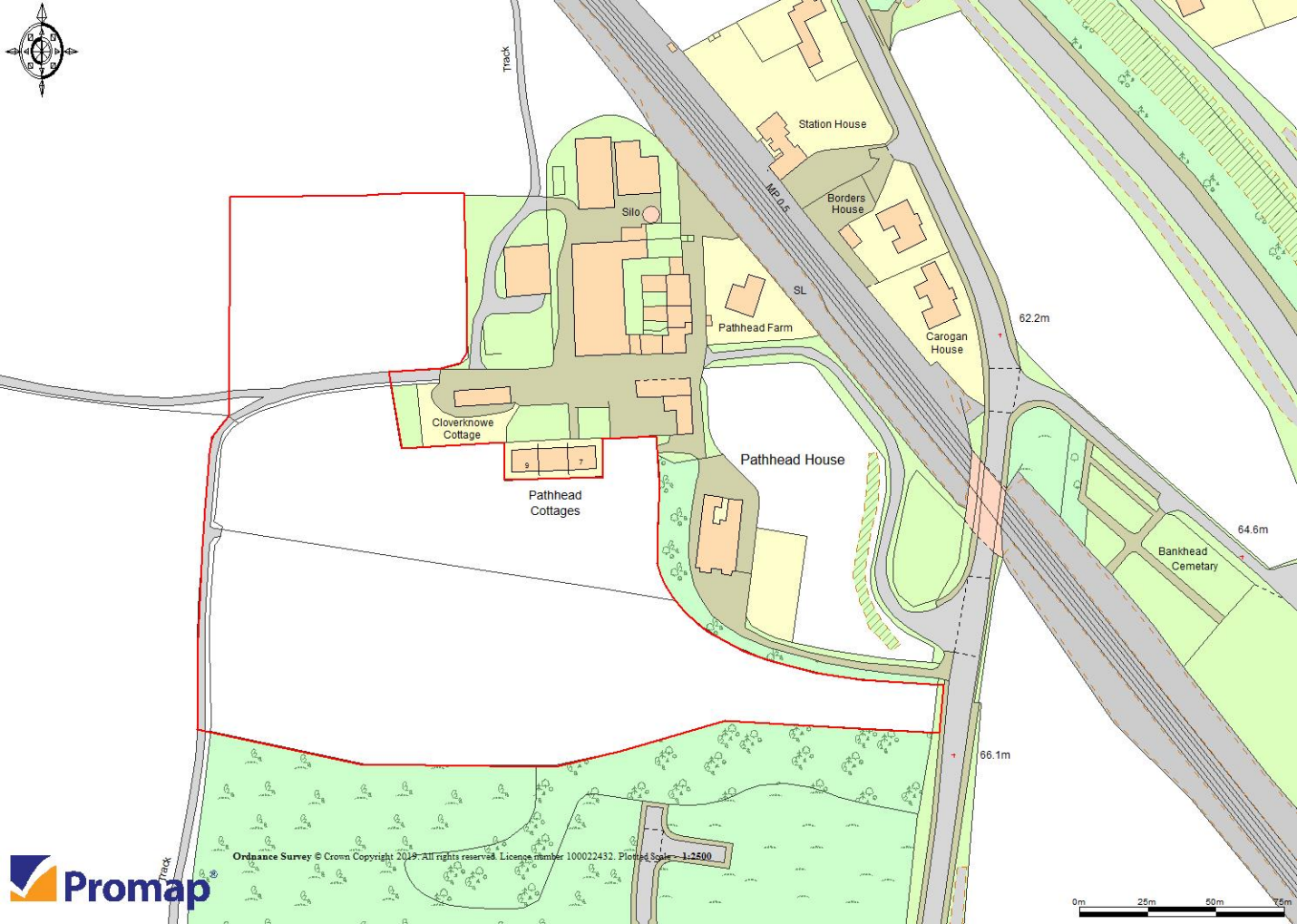
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# Land north of BCO4B, Cockburnspath

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Track

Station House

Borders House

SL

Pathhead Farm

Carogan House

62.2m

Cloverknowe Cottage

Pathhead Cottages

Pathhead House

64.6m

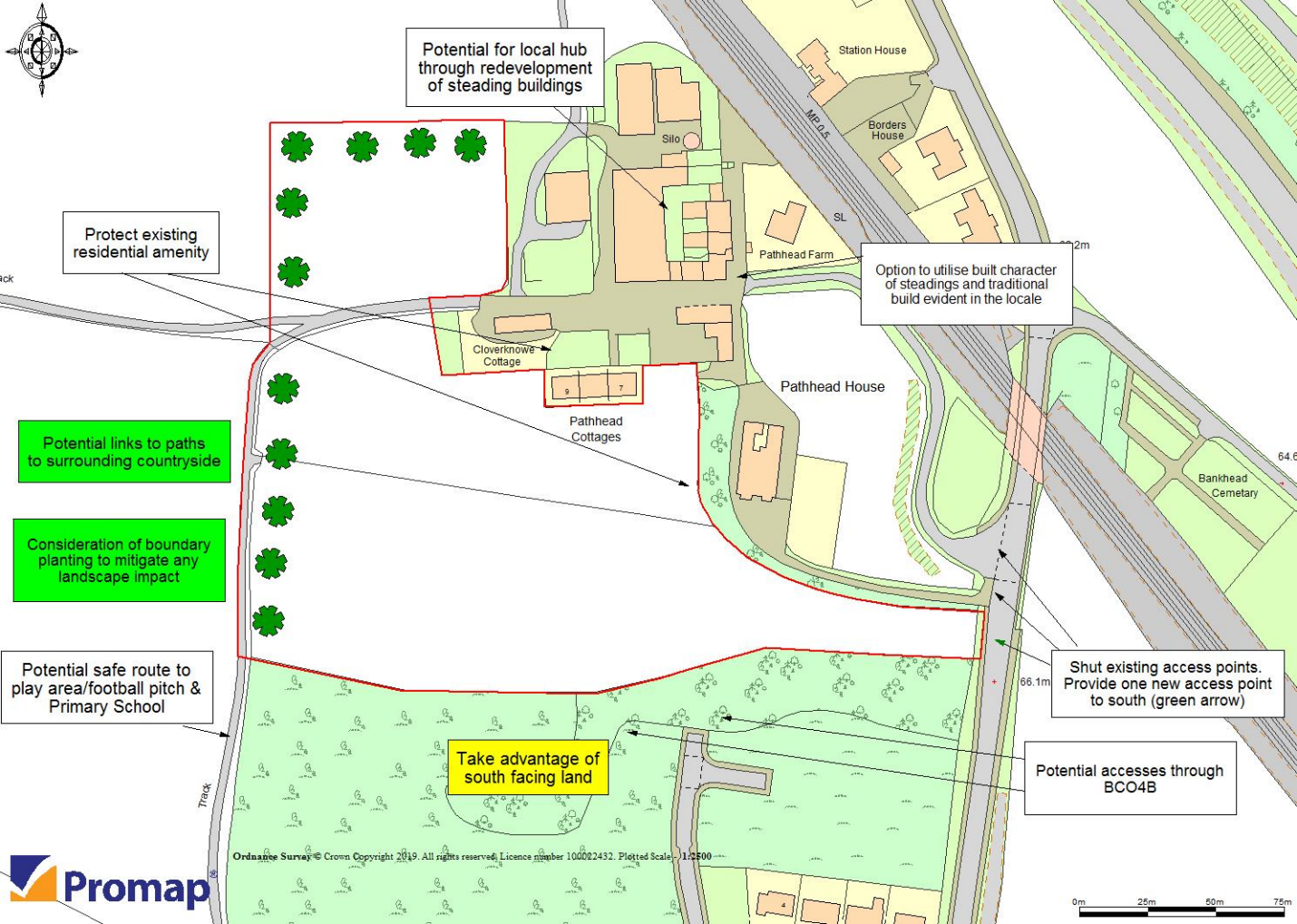
Bankhead Cemetary

66.1m

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Potential for local hub through redevelopment of steading buildings

Protect existing residential amenity

Option to utilise built character of steadings and traditional build evident in the locale

Potential links to paths to surrounding countryside

Consideration of boundary planting to mitigate any landscape impact

Potential safe route to play area/football pitch & Primary School

Take advantage of south facing land

Shut existing access points. Provide one new access point to south (green arrow)

Potential accesses through BCO4B

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# Scottish Borders Proposed Local Development Plan - Representation

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Hoprig Road, Cockburnspath





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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. This representation is put forward by Savills on behalf of [REDACTED] to bring forward an area of land measuring 0.4 hectares for allocation whilst suggesting an amendment to the settlement boundary. The land is located to the west of Cockburnspath and should be for considered for residential development within the next Local Development Plan (LDP 2).
- 1.2. The land is currently used for agricultural. To the south of the site is Hoprig Road, to the north is the remaining field, to the west is Braeside Cottage and to the east is also agricultural land which is currently under investigation for an affordable housing allocation with Berwickshire Housing Association.
- 1.3. The land has not previously been considered for development. However, it is considered that Cockburnspath is in need of more housing to support the village and to contribute to the Scottish Borders housing land supply.
- 1.4. The land would be suitable for occupying 3-4 self-build housing plots.

## 2. Site context

- 2.1. The site presents a logical and proportionate allocation to serve housing development needs in Cockburnspath. It would provide a strong defensible settlement edge which would coincide with the potential affordable housing allocation to the east. Braeside Cottage to the west acts as a finishing point and the prospective housing is mirrored by the current housing development on the opposite side of Hoprig Road.
- 2.2. The land is relatively flat and therefore would be straightforward to develop. The topography rises gently to the west however this would not create problems with the development of housing as the village has historically developed on a south-west facing slope and can make efficient drainage more deliverable in any case than a completely flat site.
- 2.3. An on-line assessment of relevant constraints has been undertaken and this shows that there are no significant issues which would impede the development going ahead.
- 2.4. The constraints assessment of the site showed that there are no:
  - Natural Heritage designations (special protection areas, Ramsar, special areas of conversation)
  - Built Heritage designations (listed buildings, conservation area, garden and designed landscapes and battlefields)
  - Flood risk

- There are no landscape designations  
Cockburnspath settlement profile and the constraints check carried out highlight that the land is prime agricultural land however due to the proposed development only being a small part of a much larger field, it is not considered a significant loss as a large proportion of the land surrounding Cockburnspath is of a similar or better quality.
- 2.5. Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) states:
- “ Where it is necessary to use good quality land for development, the layout and design should minimise the amount of such land that is required. Development on prime agricultural land, or land of lesser quality that is locally important should not be permitted except where it is essential:*
- *as a component of the settlement strategy or necessary to meet an established need, for example for essential infrastructure, where no other suitable site is available; or*
  - *for small-scale development directly linked to a rural business; or*
  - *for the generation of energy from a renewable source or the extraction of minerals where this accords with other policy objectives and there is secure provision for restoration to return the land to its former status .”*
- 2.6. Therefore, in this situation we have sought to minimise the amount of agricultural land being used and chosen a site which is a logical extension of the settlement. As SPP states above, prime agricultural land can be released if it is a component of the settlement strategy. Inevitably the maps which show prime agricultural land are very broad in scale and disguise subtle variations on the ground. There are frequently areas of poorer quality within the broader designations and this can be assessed in greater detail if required. However, we consider the overall loss of agricultural land to be de minimis in this situation given the size of the site proposed.
- 2.7. Please see our suggested amendment of the boundary in relation to the adjacent affordable housing allocation under investigation in Appendix 1. On this map, the proposed site is shown as the red hatched area, the potential affordable housing allocation is shown as the blue area and the amendment of the settlement boundary is shown as a hatched red line.
- 2.8. Hoprig Road provides sufficient vehicular access from both the east and west. In terms of pedestrian/cycle access, there is a pavement across Hoprig Road which currently provides access to the existing housing. There is enough scope and capacity around the land to develop another suitable access route from the village centre.

### 3. Site effectiveness and Deliverability

- 3.1. In order to ensure that housing sites are “effective”, they should be tested against advice noted in Planning Advice Note 2/210 (PAN) “Affordable Housing and Housing Land Audits” (Paragraph 55, PAN 2/2010). The PAN sets out criteria which respective sites should meet.
- 3.2. We feel the site performs well against the tests of effectiveness in PAN 2/2010 as follows:
- The site owners are willing to release the site for development
  - As confirmed above, there are no physical constraints on the site
  - There is no known contamination present on the site
  - There may be possible infrastructure available from the housing development across Hoprig Road.
  - The site is marketable
  - Housing is the sole preferred use of the site and delivery of the site is not dependent on cross-funding activities.
- 3.3. The considerations above are obviously at a high level at this stage and detailed investigations would take place in due course.
- 3.4. We believe that a new housing development at Cockburnspath is desperately needed as the last housing development was built in the 1990s and the last housing planning application was approved in 2005. Not only would this site contribute to the Scottish Borders effective housing supply but would also contribute to the improvement of Cockburnspath overall. We note that the two existing housing allocations (BC010B and BC04B) within Cockburnspath have not come forward despite being allocated for many years.
- 3.5. Through communications with the community council, it has become apparent that the village highly values its primary school and has concerns about its future viability with only a small number of pupils. There is a need to bring more housing to the village in order to ensure the school stays open. Providing attractive housing plots to the area will attract new residents to the village which in turn will support local facilities like the primary school.
- 3.6. Based on Savills market knowledge, we are confident that the self-build plots will sell well as there is significant growth in the number of people wanting to build their own homes.
- 3.7. Scottish Government is very supportive of incorporating the numbers of self-build opportunities available on the market. Self-build has the additional benefit of supporting small-scale builder in rural areas.

## 4. Planning Policy

### Scottish Planning Policy

- 4.1. Paragraph 110 of the Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) states that the planning system should:
- *“identify a generous supply of land for each housing market area within the plan area to support the achievement of the housing land requirement across all tenures, maintaining at least a 5-year supply of effective housing land at all times”.*
  - *Enable provision of a range of attractive, well-designed, energy efficient, good quality housing, contributing to the creation of successful and sustainable places”.*
- 4.2. The site would contribute to the effective housing supply within the Scottish Borders and the affordable housing to the east would provide a range of tenure to contribute to Cockburnspath.
- 4.3. Further, the site can also be seen as sustainable as it is proportionate in scale in relation to the size of Cockburnspath and its village character.

### SESPlan

- 4.4. The SESplan proposed plan outlines that strategic growth in the Borders will be directed to three “Rural Growth areas” one of which is Berwickshire (paragraph 3.29). Cockburnspath is located within this Rural Growth Areas hence development should be encouraged in this location.
- 4.5. In addition, Cockburnspath is in very close proximity to the A1. Paragraph 3.33 continues to state that dualling of the A1 will improve journey times to England. This will in due course make the village a more attractive and accessible place to live as the residents would be well placed to take advantage of these improved transport links.

### Local Development Plan

- 4.6. Key outcome 1 of the current Local Development Plan seeks “The continued provision of an effective housing land supply to ensure that a generous housing land supply is maintained”. The inclusion of this land within the settlement boundary would contribute towards effective housing supply by providing 3-4 attractive self-build plots.
- 4.7. We believe that the land is in line with Key Outcome 9 which states that development should be directed to sustainable locations. The land has no particular natural or built environment constraints and is located close to the A1 where you can travel to Edinburgh in under an hour.

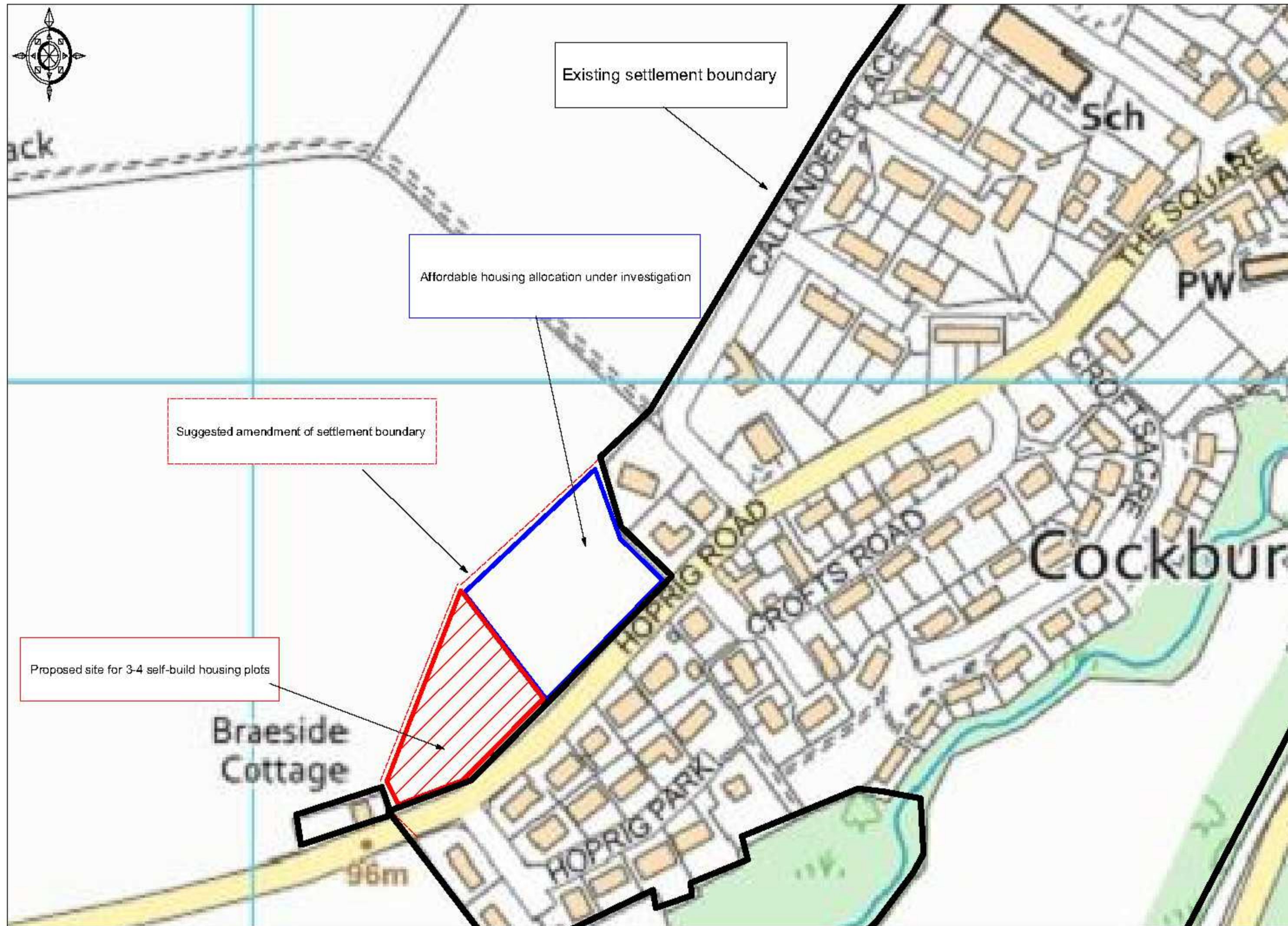


- 4.8. Cockburnspath can be considered an attractive place to live due to the primary school and small, quaint village services that exist. In addition, Berwickshire offers a selection of striking popular beaches. With only a 12 minute drive to Dunbar, key services/amenities and a high school are only a small drive away.
- 4.9. Regarding the protection of the environment and landscape, we consider that this development provides for small-scale organic growth to the village which will readily integrate with the landscape and settlement pattern. It would be of benefit to the village and surrounding areas, in addition to contributing to housing targets set by the Scottish Government. In this case, as mentioned, the development is on part of a field which is prime agricultural land however we believe it would offer significant community benefits that outweigh the need to protect this land.
- 4.10. Prospective development in due course would be in line with the policies of the relevant development plan.

## 5. Conclusion

- 5.1. [REDACTED] believes that the small-scale housing site put forward in this submission provides an excellent opportunity to allow appropriate development in Cockburnspath in support of local facilities and retention of the local population.
- 5.2. This representation has shown that Cockburnspath is located within an area that both SESplan and the current Local Development Plan have identified as appropriate for future development.
- 5.3. The extension to the settlement boundary and the site directs development to an appropriate location within the settlement which is at a suitable scale. The inclusion of this land presents visual cohesion and a natural built edge of the settlement in this location.
- 5.4. The proposed affordable housing site immediately to the east of this site is beneficial as it allows the same land use to fit appropriately within the settlement. It may also be possible to achieve shared infrastructure and services allowing economies of scale for both developments.
- 5.5. [REDACTED] and Savills would be happy to engage further with the Council through the LDP review process.

Cockburnspath - suggested amendment to settlement boundary



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# Support for Alternative Housing in the Countryside Policy Submission

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## 1. Introduction

1.1. This representation is put forward by Savills on behalf of [REDACTED] and is in response to question 8 within Scottish Borders Council Main Issues Report (MIR)

1.2. Question 8 reads: “Do you agree with the preferred option for addressing proposals for housing in the countryside? Do you agree with the alternative proposal? Have you any other options which you feel would be appropriate?”

1.3. In this case, we would like to agree to the alternative proposal with regards to stand-alone housing in the countryside. This submission will show support to the alternative suggestion that *“the policy should be amended to become much more flexible, allowing support for isolated houses in the countryside provided the design and materials are of exceptional design quality which will enhance or complement the local setting; it must respect the sense of place and be an appropriate size and mass; and, it conforms with the Council’s SPG of Placemaking and Design...”*.

1.4. The [REDACTED] consider that the ability to pursue development in the countryside and the ability to build new dwellings in rural Scottish Borders is essential for the future viability of rural communities and rural enterprises, particularly at a time when the rural economy is facing considerable change especially considering the issues around Brexit.

1.5. This submission will outline the reasons as to why we would like to support the alternative suggestion. The following points will be discussed below:

- The economic potential of rural areas
- Good to avoid urban-centric policies
- Sustainable Travel
- Rural De-population

## 2. Analysis of the case for the alternative proposal

2.1. Scottish Borders Council already have pragmatic Housing in the Countryside policies to promote high-quality housing out with settlement boundaries in relation to; building groups, conversion of buildings, restoration, replacement and for an economic requirement.

2.2. Further, within the Local Development Plan (LDP) and Supplementary Guidance, policy to encourage good urban design is detailed, through Policy PMD2 “Quality Standards”, within the LDP, and Supplementary Guidance on “Placemaking & Design”. We consider that the design principles paired with pragmatic Housing in the Countryside policies would have the ability to control the provision of stand-alone housing if this alternative was to be brought forward.

2.3. Adding this potential route to new-build development in the respective Housing in the Countryside policy will give greater scope for prospective builders. This route is more favourable than conversion/restoration as development is typically significantly less expensive.

### **2.4. The Economic Potential of Rural Areas**

2.4.1. We believe that bringing forward the alternative policy suggestion will encourage more people to relocate to the countryside. With the rise of the number of people wanting to self-build, this would provide an opportunity for people to choose a suitable location in the countryside and build a house of exceptional quality. Having the design policies in place allows innovative and interesting housing to be brought to the Scottish Borders area.

2.4.2. This policy would allow housing targets to be met more easily due to less restriction on where to build. Furthermore, significant economic benefits are brought to rural communities as more people are encouraged to build out in the countryside.

2.4.3. The Scottish Government Directorate for Rural Economy and Communities has produced in draft, statistics within a “Rural Economy Narrative” document that spells out the economic potential of Scotland’s rural areas. Some of its headlines are as follows:

- “The economy of rural Scotland is crucial to Scotland’s overall economic success currently contributes 27% of the total economic output, a figure worth £36.2 billion, almost as much as that of Edinburgh and Glasgow combined.
- A fifth of our total population live in rural areas, more than in the cities of Glasgow and Aberdeen combined.

- Increasing sustainable economic growth in rural Scotland requires a whole system approach, from business support to ensuring that infrastructure, housing, education and social care meet the needs of rural Scotland.

- By addressing these issues we will maximise rural Scotland's economic contribution, building on its existing key strengths and generating confidence and optimism for the future".

2.4.4. This alternative suggestion to the Housing in the Countryside policy is in support of the Government's economic aspirations as it allows more rural development opportunities, whilst keeping in line with design and placemaking guidelines. In turn allowing the rural economy to thrive.

### **2.5. Avoidance of urban-centric policies**

2.5.1. Throughout a number of Local Development Plans, an urban-centric approach to policy making takes place and there is a strong desire for that to be changed and for this change to be led by rural people.

2.5.2. Bringing in this alternative approach to rural housing prevents urban-centric thinking and contributes to the long-term ambition that rural economic policy is mainstream within the national economic policy.

### **2.6. Sustainable Travel**

2.6.1. The opportunity for people to build houses in a preferred location may cut down on travel distances and the excessive use of private cars.

2.6.2. Most people would like to live relatively close to their workplace (Scottish Government Key Facts 2018). Giving the opportunity to build in the countryside where development doesn't have to fit in with a building group or is a restoration/conversion provides more flexibility for people. This, in turn, will allow people to build close to their workplace which may cut car travel times.

2.6.3. Housing in rural areas provide homes for people employed locally and therefore they are not commuting significant distances. If there is a lack of attractive sites within settlement boundaries, this would provide the opportunity to build outwith the boundary whilst still staying in close proximity to their workplace.

2.6.4. In addition, homeworking has become a more popular working pattern and the development of modern housing can support this growing trend. Allowing stand-alone housing embedded into the landscape makes an attractive place to work and this experience is enhanced with the Scottish Governments R100 programme to provide superfast broadband which prioritises rural areas.

2.6.5. Overall, allowing people to build stand-alone housing in the countryside provides more opportunities for families to enjoy the countryside and for people to have a better work-life balance which are attractive characteristics which will continue to attract people to rural areas.

## 2.7. Rural De-population

2.7.1. Rural de-population is a huge challenge to Scotland and the implications for the rural economy and infrastructure.

2.7.2. With the rural population declining, it is important that new policies are implemented to increase the interest in relocating to the countryside. This alternative suggestion of policy is attractive in that there will be more locations where people can build if their development is to a high quality.

2.7.3. In addition, bringing high quality design houses to the countryside makes rural areas more eye-catching and interesting and a place where more people would like to live.

## 2.8. *Avoiding the risk of 'hotspots'*

2.8.1. As mentioned, Scottish Borders have a practical Housing in the Countryside policy where there are safeguards and controls in place to prevent any unsuitable development. We do consider that the Council need to be cautious that if permission is granted for stand-alone housing in the same areas that 'hot spots' don't occur. Ideally, cumulative build-up of single houses in certain areas should be avoided.

## 3. Conclusion

3.1. This supporting statement has outline why [REDACTED] are supportive of the alternative policy proposal.

3.2. This supporting statement outlines that there is an existing, robust policy position in place that will protect the countryside against inappropriate development.

3.3. Finally, there are a number of reasons which mean that the alternative proposal should be supported including rural de-population, economic potential of rural areas, sustainable travel and avoidance of urban-centric policies.



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