

Planning Committee (including Licensing matters) Report – Wednesday 5th March 2014

Note these are recommendations to the Community Council until passed at a full Council Meeting or submitted under delegated powers due to time constraints.

Members:- Crick Carleton (Chair), Allan Mackenzie, Martin Tolhurst, Lesley Morrison, Robin Tatler, Garry Rennie, Derek Horsburgh, Anne Snoddy

Present:- Martin Tolhurst (acting Chair), Allan Mackenzie, Garry Gennie, Derek Horsburgh, Anne Snoddy

Apologies:- Crick Carleton, Lesley Morrison, Robin Tatler

Key issues this month are:

- CC response to Second Bridge consultation
- CC response to LDP consultation
- Cloich Forest Wind Farm
- Rosetta Road Development
- CC response to development proposal at Innerleithen Road/Hydro Hotel

Second Bridge

The agreed CC response to recent consultations was submitted on 27th February to SBC. See **Appendix A**.

LDP Consultation

The agreed CC response to the SBC's LDP final draft was submitted on 1st March. See **Appendix B**.

The key elements of both responses are by now familiar to members of the Community Council. The main drift in both is a moratorium on large residential development approvals until a whole town master plan can be developed and agreed with the community (with the active participation of Vision for Peebles) and SBC.

Whilst supporting the notion of planned development and whilst recognizing that pressures for more housing make for some hard decisions, the Committee recommends that the Community Council seeks more clarification on the distribution of the Housing Supply Need and Demand Requirement and Cumulative Housing Supply forecast for the Scottish Borders area (cf. Appendix 2; Table 2; p.157 of the proposed LDP).

It remains unclear how much of the housing supply required for the period 2009 to 2032 is spread through each of the strategic development areas (SDA's) within the Borders and how much will be supplied from the Western SDA in which Peebles is the largest contributor. The Committee thinks that this is crucial to understanding how much housing Peebles is expected to contribute to the total, how much it is already contributing from completions, windfall developments and effective consents and how much it might still be expected to contribute from "constrained" developments (such as those dependent on the building of a second bridge).

Such an understanding is needed to address concerns about retaining the special character of Peebles, about the infrastructure required to service the community now and as it grows,

about the development of local jobs and affordable housing and the concomitant support for local business and tourism.

Cloich Forest Wind Farm

Partnerships for Renewables submitted a revised application in January which was circulated to Community Councils and other consultees in early February with a request for responses to be submitted by 14th March to the Scottish Government's Energy Consents & Deployment Unit.

The revised application reduces the height of the originally proposed wind turbines (18 in number) from 132m to 115m. The reduced height facilitates a more compact layout reducing its spread from 267h to 171h and the installed capacity from 61.2 MW to 54 MW.

In December 2012 the Community Council submitted its response to the original application which whilst supportive of renewable energy generation, raised specific concerns –

Concerns over the assumptions about capacity (30%) used in the application

This has been partly addressed in the revised application which now uses a capacity factor of 28%. However, this is still well above the average efficiency of all wind farms in Scotland last year of 21.5% (source: Institute of Electrical Engineers).

Lack of a realistic opportunity for local community investment to harness more community support rather than just another big business opportunity

No further forward but this may not be a realistic or strong objection point.

Ill-defined benefits to the communities most impacted

Whilst the scale is reduced the visual, noise and environmental impact remains dramatic. All of the adjacent community councils will object to the revised application.

Adverse environmental and landscape impact on a wider scale

The revised application does not address our main concerns that the turbines would be visible from the A703 and from a wide range of Peebles related viewing points (see attached file). Quite separately from this application the presence of Bow Beat wind farm and the extant application for the Hag's Hill wind farm do little to assuage our concern for over-development in this area with adverse effects on tourism and local amenity value. Bearing in mind that these wind turbines remain in excess of 100m high and that the SBC LDP specifies Cloich as having no capacity for turbines that high, I recommend that we continue to object to the application (see **Appendix .C**) until the cumulative scale and heights are reduced.

Rosetta Road Development

A revised application has been submitted. This is carried forward to the next meeting as having spoken to Planning at SBC they have confirmed that the original deadline for responses will be extended (because the application will not come before the SBC Planning Committee before June). This will give us more time to confer with the other consultees and local interest groups before responding.

Innerleithen Road/Hydro Hotel Development Application

Pre-application comments were annexed (G) to the February report by the Chairman. The Committee considered these and have redrafted the response as per **Appendix D**.

The Committee are not against medium sized windfall developments providing they meet the criteria set out in the LDP, they do not detract from the special character of the town, they count towards rather than increase the HNDA targets set out in it and the added community

services burden generated by them is deliverable and delivered. There have been a number of objections raised against this development by neighbours and the Civic Society. The Committee urge all members to visit the relevant application in this month's list (cf. Ref. No. 14/00136/FUL) to acquaint themselves with the detail.

February 2014 General Planning Applications –

Erection of dwellinghouse with integral garage|Land South Of 7 Bonnington Road Peebles Scottish Borders|Ref. No: 14/00228/FUL | Received: Sat 22 Feb 2014 | Validated: Tue 25 Feb 2014 | Status: Pending Consideration

[This is a large double plot and we have sanctioned two similar developments in Bonnington Road in the last year. No objection.](#)

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Alterations to existing conservatory|Tregony 4 Montgomery Place Peebles Scottish Borders EH45 8ET|Ref. No: 14/00219/FUL | Received: Fri 21 Feb 2014 | Validated: Mon 24 Feb 2014 | Status: Pending Consideration

[No objection](#)

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Replacement windows|6 Tweed Avenue Peebles Scottish Borders EH45 8AS|Ref. No: 14/00233/FUL | Received: Thu 20 Feb 2014 | Validated: Mon 24 Feb 2014 | Status: Pending Consideration

[No objection if the proposed windows meet current planning guidelines.](#)

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Alterations and extension to dwellinghouse|Strathbogie 36 Kirkland Street Peebles Scottish Borders EH45 8EU|Ref. No: 14/00175/FUL | Received: Thu 13 Feb 2014 | Validated: Tue 18 Feb 2014 | Status: Pending Consideration

[No objection.](#)

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Installation of ATM machine and new signage|7 Eastgate Peebles Scottish Borders EH45 8AD|Ref. No: 14/00167/LBCNN | Received: Tue 11 Feb 2014 | Validated: Wed 12 Feb 2014 | Status: Pending Consideration

[No objection](#)

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Installation of ATM machine|7 Eastgate Peebles Scottish Borders EH45 8AD|Ref. No: 14/00150/FUL | Received: Sat 08 Feb 2014 | Validated: Wed 12 Feb 2014 | Status: Pending Consideration

[Same application as above.](#)

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Extension to dwellinghouse|1 The Meadows Peebles Scottish Borders EH45 9HZ|Ref. No: 14/00159/FUL | Received: Fri 07 Feb 2014 | Validated: Mon 10 Feb 2014 | Status: Pending Consideration

[No objection](#)

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Alterations and single storey extension to dwellinghouse|16 Morninghill Peebles Scottish Borders EH45 9JS|Ref. No: 14/00144/FUL | Received: Fri 07 Feb 2014 | Validated: Mon 24 Feb 2014 | Status: Pending Consideration

[Massing looks inappropriate and difficult to see what impact on neighbouring properties from the drawings supplied. Object therefore until better information is made available.](#)

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Residential development comprising 13 dwellinghouses and 21 flats|Land East Of Glentress House Innerleithen Road Peebles Scottish Borders|Ref. No: 14/00136/FUL | Received: Thu 06 Feb 2014 | Validated: Tue 11 Feb 2014 | Status: Pending Consideration
[Separate PCC response.](#)

Erection of dwellinghouse|Land West Of Shieldgreen Venlaw High Road Peebles Scottish Borders|Ref. No: 14/00138/FUL | Received: Thu 06 Feb 2014 | Validated: Mon 10 Feb 2014 | Status: Pending Consideration
[No objection providing it meets the rules for development on farm land and satisfies area of scenic interest standards.](#)

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March 2014

Appendix A

Peebles CC response to SBC Second Bridge consultation

The current debate is a distraction from more pressing issues:

We wish to re-iterate our concerns on the disproportionate focus of attention on a second bridge debate relative to the other development issues facing the town, noting in particular that the origin of any discussion about a second bridge was a traffic study to examine ways of improving traffic flows across Peebles, and better managing traffic along the High Street. This particular debate has unconstructively shifted from a traffic management issue to a second bridge issue. The debate needs to be brought back to the former issue.

What is required is improvement in connectivity and traffic management across Peebles as a whole – for all modes of transport (pedestrian, cycle, car, bus and taxi) – and including paths, pavements and roads. We recognise that there are a number of bottlenecks in respect of motorised traffic movement around Peebles, that the disruption that these cause increases as further development in the town proceeds, but also that the scale of delays is minor in the greater scheme of things, and relative to what constitutes “traffic jams” in an urban context. And further, that the disruption caused by these bottlenecks can be greatly moderated by actions that do not require the construction of a second bridge, but are more to do with facilitating smarter alternative routing, including shifts to pedestrian and cycle alternatives, and more efficient use of road transport, and transport hubs.

We are also not won over by arguments that the Tweed Bridge is either at structural risk (SBC engineers have repeatedly indicated that it is structurally sound), or that its capacity to handle traffic will soon reach capacity (the basis of this statement is not clear, and high traffic movements across the bridge are restricted to very narrow time slots (commuter / school run), and light at all other times.

Against this background, the idea of a second bridge does not address an identified problem; indeed it can be argued to draw attention away from developing remedies to the wider connectivity issues, and away from developing remedies to specific points of congestion or disarticulation. It is also our view by a substantial majority that the idea of a second bridge is much more orientated to substantial further housing development to the southeast and south of the Peebles settlement – a development that does not have the support of the whole community nor the whole Community Council.

There needs to be a Plan B:

We also recognise that the Draft Local Development Plan currently out for consultation ties the allocation of medium to longer-term land for housing and economic development to the construction of a second bridge. We are of the view that the overall weight of opinion within Peebles is that this is an unsustainable development proposal for the town, and should not be taken forward within the LDP. On this basis, we would like the Council’s

advice on how it could meet its legal responsibilities to allocate land for future housing / economic development – and finalise the LDP component for Peebles – if the second bridge option were to be removed from the planning equation.

Clarifying some of the issues of debate therefore:

The second bridge has stimulated debate, wide concern, and divergent views. The majority of people remain confused by what is being discussed, are without access to clear presentation of the issues, and as a result are unable to state a clear opinion. This is an issue that we have had to address within the Community Council, and has led us to separate out three quite different issues associated with any discussion on the second bridge. These are:

- over-reliance on a single road bridge crossing presents a tangible risk for the community should that bridge be closed for any reason in the future;
- there is need for remediation of traffic congestion within the town – with a particular focus on congestion at the southern end of Tweed Bridge, and congestion on the High Street – which a second bridge might help achieve
- a second bridge would facilitate – indeed is essential – to expansion of the settlement footprint of Peebles south of the River Tweed.

Our views on these three issues, drawing on debate within the Community Council, and

inputs to councillors arising from various forms of meeting with Peebles residents, are summarised below.

- In addressing the first issue (the risks attaching to over-reliance on a single bridge), an alternative to building a second road bridge would be to have a well-developed and an effective disaster plan in place to specifically address the, unlikely but possible, situation where the Tweed Bridge cannot be used for road traffic.
- For the second issue (remediation of traffic congestion), opinion is divided as to whether or not Peebles can really be described as having a traffic congestion problem, or if it has, that a second bridge is the right or only means of addressing traffic congestion. On balance we are of the view that much needs to be done in this area before further consideration is given to a second bridge option. Building a second bridge does not of itself address the issue of bottlenecks or lead to a reduction in traffic congestion.
- The third issue appears to draw the more widely held view that significant further housing development south of the river will irreversibly alter the complexion, feel and attractiveness of Peebles – for the worse; and this is in part based on the experience that current consented developments at Whitehaugh and Kittlegairy are largely disconnected satellite developments to the town – representing unsustainable asymmetric development of the settlement – and that the infrastructure of the community cannot sustain such development.

Concluding remark:

If pressed to take a position on the matter, most are of the view that a second bridge is an invitation to developers to seek to build several hundred more houses to the south of the river within the next 20 years, and that this would not be good for Peebles.

Appendix B

Response to the consultation on the Scottish Borders Council Local Development Plan

The Community Council of the Royal Burgh of Peebles & District appreciates the opportunity to comment on the LDP and the effort that has gone into producing such a comprehensive and well presented document. We are broadly supportive of the aspirations behind the plan.

The following comments highlight local concerns -

Existing development to the south east of Peebles is disconnected from the town – more building in this area simply makes the current bad situation worse; this may be reasonably described as extreme asymmetric development of the town.

Polarisation of the town (north of the river, south of the river) will only get worse with the construction of further housing arising from building of a second bridge (not just in the next ten years, but in the next twenty and thirty years), making for an untenably split town.

There needs to be more focused effort on reconnecting the existing settlement pattern – through upgrading of paths and cycle networks, amongst other issues.

There remain community issues associated with proposals for a second bridge across the Tweed. On balance, proposals for a second bridge are secondary in importance to a footbridge / cycle bridge around the same sort of proposed location – linking to pedestrian / cycle paths north and south of the new footbridge / cycle bridge.

The second bridge debate divides into three community concerns:

1. Over-reliance on a single road bridge crossing presents a tangible risk for the community should the bridge be closed for any reason in the future.	This issue should be addressed through development of an appropriate disaster response strategy – and not through the building of a second road bridge – this is not addressed within the draft LDP
2. Remediation of traffic congestion within the town – with a particular focus on congestion at the southern end of Tweed Bridge and congestion on the High Street.	We are not won over by the arguments that the levels of traffic using the existing bridge are nearing capacity, or that traffic congestion (and delays to travel) are at a level that warrants a second bridge; we are of the view that road and path connectivity across Peebles, in part reflecting the Victorian lay-outs in the centre of the town, do not meet modern requirements, and

	need to be optimised (physically and through management of demand) before promoting the idea of a second bridge as a traffic remediation measure.
3. Facilitation of expansion of the settlement footprint of Peebles south of the River Tweed.	The community is overwhelmingly of the view that further substantial expansion of the settlement footprint of the town south of the town is not needed, is unsustainable, and would lead in the first instance to further asymmetric development of the settlement, followed by polarisation of the town around separate settlements north and south of the river.

Proposed housing and economic development by Edderston Ridge – the reporter addressing objections to the last amendment to the consolidated LDP rejected proposals for both housing and economic development at this location on the basis of poor area road access and traffic congestion. The basis of this objection remains – with effectively a single track road along Caledonian Road by the Ambulance and Fire Station, and a pinch point associated with the roundabout at the bottom of Edderston Road. These traffic management issues need to be resolved before any further residential development in this area is included in the LDP

Future housing needs need to be re-allocated to other sites north and south of the river – significantly, for example, medium and longer-term provision cannot be accommodated within the current development boundary north of the river without genuine improvements to access routes and supporting community services.

There needs to be a clearer statement of the composition of current and future housing allocations – including a statement of the existing number of houses in each category in Tables 2, 3, and 4 in Appendix 2 (Meeting the Housing Land Requirement) as these affect individual SDA's within the overall plan.

There is still a requirement for more truly affordable housing within Peebles – i.e. housing that people can afford to buy or to rent; this should not be interpreted as poorly designed or cheaply constructed housing.

A clear statement needs to be made that Priorsford Primary School is now at capacity, and that additional pupils will need to be directed to Kingsland Primary (nearly full) and Halyrude Primary.

- A clearer statement needs to be made that the High School is at full capacity and its catchment area (9 primary schools) needs to be reduced to contain numbers.
- The physical setting of the settlement of Peebles is such that its boundaries cannot be reasonably expanded much further – both north and south of the river; there are opportunities for some modest infill and expansion, north and south of the river, but the layout of the predominantly Victorian core of the settlement (which establishes the core character of the town) is not amenable to further large-scale (>100 house developments)
- There remain major weaknesses in traffic management within the Peebles area – notably associated with Rosetta Road, March Street, Elcho Street Brae, Young Street and the Old Town, with Caledonian Road (in respect to the straight section of this road and not with other parts), and also with traffic movements associated with each of the schools – there is no mention of this in the plan, or how this could or should be addressed
- Insufficient attention is given to the provision of economic development land; exacerbated by the fact that existing sites with economic use are being replaced with residential development (such as Dovecot, and such as various workshop sites that are being replaced with one, two or three houses); Peebles has some outstanding medium scale businesses of national and international standing; there is no reason why more such business should not operate from the town, if suitable sites and support were provided; Peebles cannot thrive simply as a dormitory to Edinburgh and Pentland Science Cluster
- There is concern that current / future allocations for economic land fall far short of requirements, and that presents a real and current problem with the identification of the Dovecot site for redevelopment; this is currently home to a wide range of businesses, all of which have been put on notice that they might have to relocate in the near future; efforts to identify premises that they can reasonably move to have been singularly unsuccessful; either redevelopment of this site should be nominated for economic use, or significant additional sites for economic development should be identified within this LDP
- There needs to be some explicit recognition of the impact of recently revised flood risk modelling undertaken and published by SEPA – part of which shows the land to the southeast of the town (Kittlegairy and beyond) to be at high risk of regular flooding
- The “core activity areas” need to be extended to include the Northgate, Cuddy Bridge, Old Town, and frontage to the east of Eastgate
- Connectivity across Peebles is poor – there are plenty of paths, footpaths and green spaces, but they are not joined into a coherent whole that meets the needs of both the community and visitors; there are clear opportunities for infill

and further development of the core paths network in and around Peebles, and more needs to be done to facilitate the movement of children to and from school, residents to and from medical and other social support facilities, and residents to and from shops and leisure facilities; such developments fit well with the LDP focus on Green Networks – not to do something about this would suggest that Green Networks are more spin than practice

□ In the context of green networks, and protection of key green areas, we are very supportive of designation of a large number of green areas for protection against development within this plan; in addition, however, we would note that there are other areas of structured woodland and/or fields / beds that would benefit from increased levels of protection (note the identification of some such key features within the Landscape Capacity Study undertaken by SBC landscape architects in 2007), much of which lies in private ownership; we would note in particular the woodland associated with Kingsmeadows House (currently on sale, with a brochure suggesting potential for significant development of new housing), and the need to protect green corridors surrounding and associated with access to the town's four schools.

Appendix C

Proposed response to the revised application for Cloich Forest Wind Farm

“We refer to the revised application for the above section 36 application for the construction of a wind farm at Cloich Forest (AMEC letter 5th February 2014 refers).

We laid out in detail the views of our community council to the original application in December 2012.

We continue to have concerns over the assumed generating efficiency used in the revised application (reduced from 30% to 28%) as it is our understanding that the average efficiency in the whole of Scotland last year was less than 22% (source: Institute of Electrical Engineers).

We remain of the view that the revised application for 18 turbines each 115m high, whilst now sited on a reduced footprint within Cloich Forest, will still impact dramatically on the local community and on wildlife. Further the wind turbines will continue to be visible from the A703 and a range of viewing points in Peeblesshire. The cumulative effects of Bow Beat wind farm, the extant application for Hag Law and this application will have a detrimental effect on tourism and local amenity on the scale and particularly at the heights proposed.

The final draft of the SBC Local Development Plan to 2032 specifically excludes wind turbines over 100m in height in the area which includes Cloich and Hag Law, unless the developer “can demonstrate how the impacts of the proposal on the key constraints and any significant adverse effects can be mitigated” (SBC LDP Policy ED9). We remain unconvinced that the developer can do so unless the heights are reduced so that visibility and local impact can be reduced to an acceptable level.

We continue to object to the application therefore”

Appendix D

Proposed response to the Innerleithen Road/Hotel Hydro planning application No. 14/00136/FUL

“We refer to the application above for the development of 34 houses and flats.

The Community Council are not in principle against windfall developments and recognise the contribution windfall developments can make towards achieving housing need requirements within the Scottish Borders.

In its response to the proposed Local Development Plan 2013 (LDP), the Council sought clarification from SBC on the contribution Peebles has made in the period 2009 to date from completions, windfall developments and effective consents and how much it is expected to contribute from effective consents and from windfall and constrained developments in the future up to 2032 (the period covered by the LDP in respect to HNDA requirements – cf. Appendix 2, Vol. 1 of the LDP).

We also raised a number of concerns relating to certain elements of the LDP within the Peebles settlement with reference to asymmetrical sprawl, lack of industrial land and better traffic management and general connectivity within the town north and south of the river.

The Council consider that without a clear understanding of the volume and types of housing to be developed in Peebles over the next few years and also of the infrastructural and service developments required to support the present and future population of the town, the Council cannot support medium to large scale developments of this kind at the present time.

We support the technical objections raised by the Civic Society and neighbouring house holders in respect to this application and will not repeat them in this letter as they are well-documented in the application file on the SBC web-site.

In our view the application would benefit considerably from reduced “cramming”, greater mitigation of the privacy and visual impacts on neighbours and on the views of the Hydro’s estate from south of the development. The number of units that are to be built to the rear of the development present a problem in this respect and the proposed road access effectively crams the large houses at the front unacceptably.

This is not an infill or gap development as the void is to frame the view of the Hydro from below and from the other side of valley. The development would substantially change that view and must therefore conform to the highest standards of compatibility with LDP requirements.

We would also seek reassurances that the old railway track to the rear of the development could be redeveloped as an extension of the Innerleithen-Peebles multi-use path – as an explicit right of way, or through transfer to community ownership.”