Introduction

This planning brief sets out the main opportunities and constraints relating to this former High School site in Duns. It provides a framework vision for the future development of the site which is allocated in the Finalised Local Plan Amendment as a redevelopment opportunity.

The brief identifies where detailed attention to specific issues is required and where development contributions may be sought. The brief should be read alongside relevant national, strategic and local planning guidance, a selection of which is provided on Page 4, and should be a material consideration for any planning application submitted for the site.

The planning brief should be read in conjunction with the developer guidance in Annex A.
Local context

Duns is located within the eastern Borders and is identified as one of the principal towns within the Eastern Development Hub in the Scottish Borders Structure Plan 2002.

The town, with a population of 2,626 (2001 Census), sits with the Castle to the north whilst the southern edge of the settlement sits on the Lower Merse lowland with drumlins. A myre (bog) runs east to west across the town. Duns and its hinterland are of high amenity value and there are many attractive views of the town.

As an important administrative centre in Berwickshire, Duns plays an important complementary role with Eyemouth in helping meet housing and employment needs in the area. The 3 High Schools Project has delivered a new high school and associated playing fields to the south of the A6105 on the approach into the town from the west. Duns Primary School has severe capacity issues as a result of recent developments in the catchment area.
Policy context

The brief should be read alongside relevant national and local planning guidance, the most relevant of which is presented in this section.

National
The Scottish Government has a number of policy and guidance documents that could be useful to the consideration of this development:
- SPP 3: Planning for Homes (revised 2008)
- SPP 6: Renewable Energy
- SPP 17: Planning for Transport
- PAN 61: Planning & SUDS
- Designing Places: A Policy Statement for Scotland
- SPP23: Planning & The Historic Environment
- PAN 33: Development of Contaminated Land
- PAN 65: Planning & Open Space
- PAN 67: Quality Housing
- PAN 74: Affordable Housing
- PAN 76: New Residential Streets
- PAN 77: Designing Safer Places
- PAN 78: Inclusive Design
- PAN 83: Masterplanning
- PAN 84: Reducing Carbon Emissions in New Development

Structure Plan
The Scottish Borders Structure Plan was approved in 2002. In terms of this plan, Duns lies within the Berwickshire Housing Market Area. An alteration to the Structure Plan was approved by Scottish Ministers in June 2009.

Local Plan
The Local Plan identifies the former Berwickshire High School site for Redevelopment Opportunity (zRO15), with potential uses including a primary school, sports facilities, community facilities and recreational open space. The existing playing field at Todlaw in Duns would transfer to the brief site, which would then allow the Todlaw playing field to be redeveloped for housing, as proposed within the Finalised Scottish Borders Local Plan Amendment. Policy H3 of the Local Plan states that sites proposed for redevelopment may be developed for housing, employment (classes 4, 5 and 6 of the Use Classes Order) or retailing, subject to the sequential test, or a mix of uses that could include community facilities and open space depending on the location of the site, the needs of the community and the deliverability of alternative uses. Redevelopment sites may be developed for single uses.

A number of policies included in the adopted Local Plan will be applicable to this site including ‘Principle 1-Sustainability’, ‘G1-Quality Standards for New Development’, ‘H1-Affordable Housing’ and ‘H3-Land Use Allocations’. The former high school buildings are Category B listed (Policy BE1).
**Key Considerations**

1. Sensitive landscape setting of Duns Castle Designed Landscape would require to be safeguarded. Many mature trees within the Designed Landscape overhang the site.

2. The character and setting of the Category B Listed Former High School buildings would require to be protected.

3. The proposals for the site would have little or no impact on the Category C(S) Listed Buildings of The Geans and South Lodge as their main facades do not face onto the site and there would be minimal external physical development on site. Landscape features provide separation between the properties and the planning brief site.

4. A6105 road leading to Gavinton and beyond.

5. A6105 road leading to Duns Town Centre and beyond.

6. The site benefits from a south / south easterly aspect.

7. Land to be safeguarded from development in order to protect the prominent frontage of the Category B Listed Former School buildings.

8. Flatter northern part of the site with landscape features including two trees within the site and mature trees along the northern and north eastern boundaries as well as an established hedgerow along the western boundary.

9. The south east facing elevations of the main element of the former school buildings are particularly prominent from the A6105.
Site analysis - context and consideration

The site was formerly occupied by the Berwickshire High School, is located on the north western edge of the settlement, in a relatively prominent position on the approach into the town from the west (See Figure 1). The southern part of the site abounds the A6105.

The 3 High Schools Project has delivered a new high school and associated playing fields to the south of the former High School, on the opposite side of the A6105. As a consequence, a proportion of the former buildings and land associated with the former High School are now vacant and available for appropriate redevelopment and are the subject of this brief.

Following consultation with the Technical Services and the Education and Lifelong Learning Departments of Scottish Borders Council, it is fully expected that the site will be developed to accommodate a primary school, sports facilities, community facilities and recreational open space. It is on this basis that this planning brief is prepared.

The brief must also, however, prepare for alternative uses particularly as the site is identified within the Adopted Local Plan for redevelopment opportunity which includes alternative options such as housing, employment, retailing or a mix of uses that could include community facilities and open space depending on the location of the site, the needs of the community and the deliverability of alternative uses.

The key considerations for the site are identified in Figure 2. The site is prominent for both east and west bound traffic on the A6105 (Image 1). It is, for the most part, relatively flat with the exception of the southern part which slopes from the former school buildings down to the A class road. The site benefits from a south / south easterly aspect.

The existing buildings currently comprise the former school with its principal elevation facing south eastwards, running parallel with the A class road. There is a collection of buildings to the rear including a gymnasium and squash court. To the north east of the former school complex is a pair of semi-detached dwellinghouses (janitor’s house) with the swimming pool building, which remains in use today, to the north west.

The former High School is a Category B listed building (Image 2). This listing includes the former gymnasium, squash court, janitor’s house and swimming pool complex. The building is noted as being a fine example of a streamlined Modernist building, redolent in period details such as box frame windows. It is understood the school was designed just prior to the 2nd
Site analysis - context and consideration (cont)

World War and work was not started until the 1950s, when money was made available. It was opened in 1958.

An existing dwellinghouse to the west of the site, known as ‘The Geans’ is Category C(S) listed. South Lodge to the east of the site, at the entrance to the Duns Castle Estate, is Category B Listed.

The site is bounded to the north and east by a well established wooded area. This wooded area forms part of the Duns Castle Designed Landscape. Existing mature trees within the Designed Landscape currently overhang the northern and eastern boundaries of the brief site (Image 3). To the south is the A6105 with the new Berwickshire High School beyond, and to the west is agricultural land.

The site currently accommodates three sports pitches. These are located to the north and west of the redundant school buildings, see Figure 2.

The site is currently served by one vehicular access off the A6105, located within the south western corner of the site. Within the site, vehicles have access to parking facilities within the eastern corner of the site, with an access extending along the front of the school, as well as parking to the rear of the main building.

An existing footpath leads directly from the A6105 to the main entrance on the south facing elevation of the school buildings. Open space between the former school buildings and the A6105 provides an attractive setting to the listed building. There is a drop off area used by school buses and cars within the south western corner of the site, this is now used by pupils and parents to drop and collect pupils attending the new High School. Pupils park their cars here during the day and a couple of public service buses have short term lay-ups here. No school buses use this area. Two bus stops will be provided on the A6105 close to the site in the near future.
Opportunities and constraints

To achieve a successful development the following opportunities and constraints should be considered.

**Opportunities**
The location of the site creates a wide range of opportunities for the site:

- The south / south east facing aspect is good for energy efficiency.
- The land is flat for the most part making it easy to utilise and develop.
- The site is bounded by well established trees and hedgerows, providing an attractive backdrop and natural screen, which could be enhanced.
- Good access to services and facilities and employment in the settlement with good access to public transport, being located on the A class road.
- The site offers the opportunity for the relocation of the existing Primary School which is currently operating at capacity.

**Constraints**

**Landscape designation**
The site is located immediately adjacent the Duns Castle Designed Landscape. This designation needs to be considered when developing the site, avoiding negative impact on the environment or the landscape. It is particularly important to safeguard the existing trees which are located within the Designed Landscape which overhang the site.

**Listed Buildings**
The site is occupied by the category B listed former high school buildings and lies adjacent to ‘The Geans’, a category C(S) listed dwellinghouse, and ‘South Lodge’, a category C(S) listed dwellinghouse. The character and setting of these buildings must be respected in the site layout and design.

**Water and drainage**
In respect of Waste Treatment Works, there is capacity in Duns although contributions may be required for connections. Developers will be required to pay for minor water network improvements to enable development. Contact should be made with Scottish Water.

**Contaminated Land**
In terms of potential sources of contamination that may be present, historic maps indicate tanks of unspecified use to be present on site. Additionally, asbestos may be present within the fabric of the buildings.

**Transport**
There will be a requirement of any development for provision of car parking spaces.

**School**
The existing primary school is located approximately 325m to the east of the brief site. This primary school is suffering from severe capacity issues.
Figure 3—Development vision—for illustrative purposes only

Key:
- Retained buildings as Primary School
- Proposed Community buildings
- Proposed School site boundary
- Proposed Pedestrian route
- Proposed Vehicular route

Legend:
- Existing playing fields
- Swimming Pool entrance
- Sports Building
- Public, museum, staff & School Car Park
- Service Area for plantroom and Museum
- Museum entrance
- Swimming Pool
- Proposed Museum
- School Play Ground
- Kitchen Deliveries
- Staff Entrance
- Existing playing fields
- Existing sports building to be transferred to Sports Duns.
- Nursery Play Ground
- Landscaped courtyard
- New Path
- Primary School entrance
- New Gate Posts and Gate for vehicular control
- Road crossing and gate
- Full size Football
- Three quarter size Football
**Development vision**

The aspiration for the site is to provide accommodation for the relocation of Duns Primary School, sports facilities, community facilities and recreational open space for the settlement of Duns. Figure 3 indicates possible reuses of the main building currently under consideration.

The brief must, however, prepare for any other eventualities in the future should current proposals for conversion of the buildings not come to fruition. The site may be developed, for example, for housing as this would be consistent with the requirements of Policy H3 (Land Use Allocations). Opportunities for new build housing within the site are extremely limited, however, as a result of the fact that the three existing playing fields would remain safeguarded. It is possible that the most likely location of housing would be within the range of existing buildings, whether it is new build or the part conversion of these existing buildings.

**Primary school**

The existing primary school within Duns has severe capacity issues as a result of recent developments in the catchment area and it is likely this will be relocated to the former High School site. The Finalised Local Plan Amendment allocates the existing primary school site as a redevelopment opportunity in the event of it being relocated. The Plan also allocates the Todlaw Playing Fields for housing. This allocation can be redeveloped when the existing playing fields are transferred to the former Berwickshire High School site.

**Listed building**

The original building is Category B listed and must therefore be maintained and protected. Any development would require to be in keeping with the character and appearance of the listed building. Any alterations/extensions/demolitions to the building would likely require full planning permission and/or listed building consent.

It is anticipated that the privately run Allsorts Nursery would be relocated to this building from its town centre location and accessed from the courtyard and car park to the rear of the relocated Primary School. The Jim Clark Museum on Newtown Street is also presently housed in too confined a space. The former High School technical block has been identified as a suitable alternative building and has public and service access from different sides, and vehicular access into the building from the service side. The original High School Gym and changing rooms would be retained for community use and for the use of the primary school. Sports Duns have indicated an interest in owning the larger sports hall and associated changing rooms with a view to upgrading the facility. The swimming pool would remain unchanged (See Figure 3).

The proposal at the outset of this process was to develop the playing fields for housing, and locate new sports facilities in the Todlaw area of the town. However, through the consultation process it became clear that the consensus was to retain sports use on this site and release recreational land at Todlaw area for housing.
Access and parking

The principle adopted for vehicular movement on site has been to place all car parking on the existing playground to the rear of the proposed Primary School building, in a location with easy access to all the different occupancies. This would mean that controlled service access would only be required within the primary school area. The areas to the front of the school building would be used for school playgrounds.

A new pedestrian access to the site is proposed to the east to provide a barrier free access. Due to the gradient it is possible that this would not be Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) compliant. Generally pedestrian accesses have been kept as independent as possible from vehicular routes.

The former bus parking area within the western corner of the site is to be used for parent drop off and pick up. This, and all movement on the site, has been developed with the Safer routes to School Section and discussed at public meetings.

The Primary School will occupy the main listed two storey building to the front of the site. It is currently proposed that one of the rear wings of the listed building and a later extension be demolished to open up the rear courtyard to the proposed car park. These demolitions would require the benefit of listed building consent. The enlarged courtyard landscaping would be improved and made into an attractive area from which the various buildings would be accessed. The Allsorts Nursery would require part of this area as a secure playground.

The entrance to the Jim Clark Museum will need to be improved and made visually prominent. A visitor’s access from the car park to the main school entrance/reception area will also have to be clearly visible. Significant work will be required to modernise the older buildings fabric. Internal alterations will be required to adapt the original High School to current Primary School use. This will be mostly to classroom areas as the rooms are too small at present. The former janitor’s houses to the east of the site may be used by the Social Work Department as overnight accommodation.

A School Travel Plan will be required. Further guidance should be sought from the Council’s Strategic Transportation Planning Section, see contacts in Annex 2.

- At the existing road junction with the A6105 there will be a need to improve sight-lines to afford visibility splays of 4.5m by 90m in each direction. This would entail realigning the roadside boundary wall.
- Safe provision would need to be made for pedestrians crossing the A6105 in the vicinity of the new pedestrian route.
- The main internal vehicular route, generally following the line of the existing access road, will have to be upgraded in terms of horizontal alignment, vertical alignment and make-up. It is expected the road and car park will be adopted as public.
- Careful design consideration will be required where the pedestrian routes cross the vehicular routes.
Development contributions
Development contributions are sought where provision, improvement and maintenance of infrastructure, services and facilities are required to facilitate the new development.

Affordable housing
The requirement for affordable housing should be met in line with Local Plan policy H1. The SPG on affordable housing advises that a contribution of 20% is required from this site. The Council’s policy requires residential development exceeding 4 units to provide affordable housing on-site.

Education and Lifelong Learning
The site is located within the catchment area of Duns Primary School and Berwickshire High School. For any residential development within the site, there would be a requirement for a financial contribution towards education infrastructure provision. Development contributions required for Duns Primary School are currently £3,124 for each house and £468 for each flat with two or more bedrooms. For Berwickshire High School the amount requested is £4,386 per house and £658 for each flat with two or more bedrooms. One bedroom residential units and those satisfying SBC Affordable Housing policy definitions are currently exempt from E & LL contribution requirements. These figures are valid until 31 March 2010 when they are updated via the Building Cost Information Service (BCIS) indices.

Play areas and open space
Contributions towards play areas and green space should be in line with the Council’s Green Space Strategy SPG. Upgrading of existing playing fields could be considered as a part of the provision for play areas. It is also required that maintenance for any play area, proposed paths and open space are addressed as part of the considerations.

Access
Any developer will require to either fully or partially accommodate the costs of identified off-site sustainable access routes necessitated by cumulative settlement development. Development contributions will be required for upgrading of pedestrian and cycle links to/from the site.
Submission requirement
This section sets out the requirement for development proposals. Any proposals should reflect this planning brief and also the developer guidance in Annex A. The following assessment should be submitted to the Council at an early stage to achieve an effective development management process.

Design Statement: Developers must illustrate the development vision principles in their design statement and demonstrate that due consideration has been given of the following issues for the local area:

- Spaces between buildings
- Sustainable environment
- Density and use
- Localised topography
- Views
- Vegetation pattern
- Boundary treatment
- Streets

and the following key issues for proposed buildings:

- Scale/proportion/materials/colour/articulation
- Relationship to site plot
- Relationship to adjacent buildings/structures
- Contribution to wider townscape
- Distinctiveness
- Listed Building

Traffic Assessment (TA): Developers must through a traffic assessment demonstrate how the development will function in transport terms with emphasis on sustainable travel patterns.

School Travel Plan: Needs to detail any travel issues a school has and how these would be addressed. It should contain clearly stated aims and objectives detailing how the school could improve road safety and promote sustainability.

Ecological Impact Assessment: This would be required including an extended Phase 1 habitat survey and survey for bats and breeding birds of any buildings to be demolished or restored.

Drainage Impact Assessment: A drainage impact assessment needs to be included in any submissions and address issues such as the development's impact on the catchment area and waste and surface water drainage solutions.

Energy efficiency: Developers must submit a statement for the Council's approval detailing how energy efficiency measures and low and zero carbon technologies will be incorporated into the development proposals, and the level of CO₂ reduction that will be achieved. The non-domestic aspects of the development must be assessed against BREEAM (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method) principles and it is expected that it would achieve an 'excellent' rating.

Eco-homes: An Eco-home statement should demonstrate how advice has been sought from a licensed assessor at an early stage in the project to ensure that the estimated rating will be obtained. A full list of licensed assessors can be found at the EcoHomes website (www.ecohomes.org).
**Refuse vehicle access strategy** - The strategy should include details of suitable turning areas for refuse vehicles, swept path analysis and details of bin locations.

**Contamination** - An appropriate assessment of any contamination within the site should be undertaken, with any mitigation measures identified and undertaken prior to any development.

Checklist for key submission requirements

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Former Berwickshire High School Planning Brief

Contacts

SBC Plans & Research

Charles Johnston (Principal Officer), Council Headquarters, Newtown St Boswells, Melrose, TD6 0SA
Tel: 01835 826671 E-mail: CJohnston@scotborders.gov.uk

Karen Hope (Planning Officer), Council Headquarters, Newtown St Boswells, Melrose, TD6 0SA
Tel: 01835 825060 E-mail: KEHope@scotborders.gov.uk

SBC Development Management

Ian Aikman (Development Manager (East), Council Headquarters, Newtown St Boswells, Melrose, TD6 0SA
Tel: 01835 825060 E-mail: IAikman2@scotborders.gov.uk

Barry Fotheringham (Principal Planning Officer), Council Headquarters, Newtown St Boswells, Melrose, TD6 0SA
Tel: 01835 825060 E-mail: BFotheringham@scotborders.gov.uk

SBC Countryside & Heritage

Andy Millar (Countryside & Heritage Manager), Council Headquarters, Newtown St Boswells, Melrose, TD6 0SA
Tel: 01835 825062 E-mail: AMillar@scotborders.gov.uk

Andy Tharme (Ecology Officer), Council Headquarters, Newtown St Boswells, Melrose, TD6 0SA
Tel: 01835 826514 E-mail: ATharme@scotborders.gov.uk

Jon Bowie (Development Negotiator) Council Headquarters, Newtown St Boswells, Melrose, TD6 0SA
Tel: 01835 825060 E-mail: JBowie@scotborders.gov.uk

Carol Cooke (Urban Designer) Council Headquarters, Newtown St Boswells, Melrose, TD6 0SA
Tel: 01835 825060 E-mail: Carol.Cooke@scotborders.gov.uk

Mark Douglas (Principal Officer (Heritage & Design), Council Headquarters, Newtown St Boswells, Melrose, TD6 0SA
Tel: 01835 826563, E-mail: MTDouglas@scotborders.gov.uk

SBC Technical Services (Road User Group)

Ron Elliot (Road User Manager), Council Headquarters, Newtown St Boswells, Melrose, TD6 0SA
Tel: 01835 824000 E-mail: RElliot@scotborders.gov.uk

SBC Technical Services (Environmental Services)

Julie Rankine (Waste Strategy Manager), Council Headquarters - Scott House (A), Sprouston Road, Newtown St Boswells, Melrose, TD6 0QD
Tel: 01835 825111 Email: JCRankine@scotborders.gov.uk

SBC Technical Services (Environmental Services)

Jason Hedley (Parks Manager), Galashiels Area Office, Paton Street, Galashiels, TD1 3AS.
Tel: 01896 661770 E-mail: JHedley@scotborders.gov.uk

SBC Technical Services (Environmental Services)

Anthony Carson (Principal Environmental Health Officer), 34-42 High Street, Hawick, TD9 9EF.
Tel: 04150364706 E-mail: ACarson@scotborders.gov.uk

SBC Education & Lifelong Learning

Annette Patterson (Asset Manager), Council Headquarters, Newtown St Boswells, TD6 0SA
Tel: 01835 824000 Email: APatterson@scotborders.gov.uk
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Business Services Manager, Planning and Economic Development, Scottish Borders Council, Council Headquarters, Newtown St Boswells, Melrose, TD6 0SA. Telephone: 01835 825060. E-mail: ped@scotborders.gov.uk