

PLANNING STATEMENT



ERECTION OF THREE HOLIDAY LODGES, ACCESS AND ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE

HALLRULE FARM

CLIENT: CLAIRE MACTAGGART

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This statement has been prepared by Ferguson Planning on behalf of our client, Mrs Claire Mactaggart, who seeks to erect three high end holiday lodges on lands at Hallrule Farm some seven miles to the south west of Jedburgh.
- 1.2 Hallrule Farm is a family owned business and which extends to approximately 1,570 acres and currently operates in cereals, cattle and sheep grazing. The Mactaggart family are keen to diversify their farm business and seek to lead the way in the Scottish Borders for bespoke and truly unique holiday lodges.
- 1.3 The development of a tourism aspect to the farming business will allow David's wife Claire to become more involved with the business and indeed bring her retail and e-commerce experience and skills into play. In addition, there will be scope to bring in the younger family members into the business as well as further local employment.
- 1.4 Set within a valley, with Hallrule Burn meandering through it, the proposal is a get away from it destination to be known as 'Moonriver Borders'. The lodges provide accommodation in a truly unique setting and something new to the Scottish Borders holiday market.
- 1.5 It is innovative in the use of underutilised low grade land. It will not be visible from public receptors and will provide the "escapism" sought. A place to truly relax and get away from it all but still close to nearby tourist attractions such as Jedburgh Castle, Born in the Borders and the newly opened Borders distillery for example.
- 1.6 The purpose of this statement is to provide details of the proposal and set out the key planning policy and material considerations in the determination of this application. The remainder of this statement is structured as follows:
 - Section 2: Site Context
 - Section 3: The Proposal
 - Section 4: Planning Policy
 - Section 5: Policy Compliance
 - Section 6: Conclusion

2. The Site

- 2.1 Hallrule Farm is located approximately seven miles south west of Jedburgh. The subject site extends to approximately 1.23 ha accessed via the Jedburgh Road (B6358) and then via a rural road that leads onto Bonchester Bridge.
- 2.2 The core part of the proposal lies within a valley which has limited agricultural purpose and grade. It is used largely as an access track between fields and not visible from the main road. A new access track would be formed opposite the farm steading and run along the boundary of the field to the east. There will be new fencing and hedgerow planted along the access track to soften the overall appearance of the track leading then up to the proposed lodges.
- 2.3 A Location Plan is contained within the application submission and which puts the site in context with the wider Hallrule Farm operation.

3. The Proposal

- 3.1 The proposal is to erect three high end holiday lodges that are guided by sustainable development principles and which seeks to address deficiency in the provision of bespoke holiday accommodation in the southern area of the Scottish Borders.
- 3.2 In this section we seek to provide an overview on matters such as: design and access, landscape, archaeology, flooding and the overall economic benefits of the proposal.

Design

- 3.3 The site location of the lodges is a long, deep, winding river valley at Hallrule Farm. The design of the proposed lodges takes its main identifying elements from the steep wooded south facing slopes of the valley.
- 3.4 These elements comprise a desire to allow all habitable rooms in the lodges the benefit of south facing views and natural sunlight. A panoramic aspect of the local spectacular Border countryside from first light in the mornings to the setting sun in the evenings.
- 3.5 The benefit of privacy and private space for each lodge with room for external activities is also a core function together with discrete vehicular access to each lodge.
- 3.6 The use of quality natural local materials both in the construction and furnishing of the lodges is key. This will include natural stone, timber together with sedum grass/wild flower roofing. The purposes is to allow the lodges to sit into rather than on the landscape to reduce their visual impact but still retain a strong identity.
- 3.7 Each lodge is designed with angled cross walls to allow different aspects from each room and staggered floor levels which follow the natural slope of each site. This will again reduce the amount of earthmoving required and take advantage of the natural ground levels.
- 3.8 The crosswalls are the main structural elements and will be constructed in masonry with a natural stone coursed external finish. The spaces between the cross walls will be infilled with insulated glass panels which will slide to allow access to the covered balconies accessible to each room on the first floor and providing external cover space to the bedrooms and bathrooms on the ground floor.
- 3.9 The layout of each lodge is similar with all living areas located on the first floor to allow great views and the bedrooms, en-suite bathrooms and utility spaces to the ground floor again divided by the cross walls.
- 3.10 The spaces outside each bedroom and en-suite are intended to be used as private spaces protected by the extended cross walls and provided with paved sitting areas

and a winding watercourse and ponds fed from the natural artesian well water and excess rainwater from the grassed roof.

- 3.11 The roof is intended to reflect the local landscape by being covered with grasses taken from the surroundings and terminates in a glazed rooflight to allow daylight into the depth of the lodge and light the staircase and entrance hall on the ground floor.
- 3.12 The first floor serrated balcony will have a glass balustrade to allow unrestricted views. The surrounding landscape to each lodge will remain basically as it exists with some shrub and tree maintenance and enhancement.
- 3.13 All of these elements will combine to ensure a minimum visual impact of the development into this unique piece of secret landscape in the Borders and provide holiday makers with a unique experience in lodges with privacy, spectacular aspects and a design which respects to local area and the elements which have influenced their form and materials.
- 3.14 The cottages will be environmental friendly with renewable technologies used at every opportunity. Further details on the design are contained within the site and elevational drawings package lodged with this application.

Layout

- 3.15 The layout of the access road and positioning of the lodges take their cue from the natural way the river valley creates distinct locations allowing each lodge to sit into a natural slope with a unique identified setting. The identified “platforms” pre-exist and are naturally the best position points in which to set the lodges.
- 3.16 A newly created rainwater harvested stream feature will run along the front of the lodges again taking influence from the neighbouring burn.
- 3.17 The access road has been located generally along natural contours to ensure that its impact is reduced and earth moving kept to a minimum. Meandering down to the new bridge crossing has again been designed to have minimal impact in the landscape and again will go unnoticed from key public receptor points.
- 3.18 Existing and new screen planting will reduce the visual impact of the access road to and from the lodges and will be finished with a natural gravel finish and visually soft edges.

Access and Parking

- 3.19 The existing access will be upgraded and a new access junction created. This will be made up of, at the junction with the main, self-draining paving leading onto a built up gravel surface road to the lodges. This will enable appropriate visibility and ensure a safer environment for users of the access and drivers onto the main road.
- 3.20 The access road will incorporate two inter visible passing places and which will then meander down the embankment and across a newly formed bridge sympathetically designed to fit into the surroundings. The bridge retaining structures will be constructed out with the watercourse.
- 3.21 Each lodge will have dedicated car parking with capacity for two vehicles. The access will also allow for emergency vehicles. It is intended that refuse collection will be undertaken at the main access.

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

- 3.22 As detailed previously the proposal will largely go unnoticed from public receptor or viewpoints due to it sitting low into the valley. Any landscape impact would be extremely localised and would not be significant. The proposal will only come into view on approach from the valley ridge above and which is private farmland. The picture below provides some context of this.



- 3.23 The lodges will be built into and against the lower valley background with existing landscaping retained and with new planting proposed in and around the lodges to soften their appearance further. From the valley ridge above looking down the cottages will further blend with the landscape as a result of grass/sedum roofs.
- 3.24 The subject site appears to have fallen out with a recent local landscape review but does lie within a wider Special Landscape Area (SLA) associated with the Teviot Valleys. For reasons mentioned previously, the proposal is not considered to significantly impact on this designation. Moreover, the proposal will assist in bringing walkers and tourism to the benefit of the local area and to enjoy walks and visitor attractions within the wider Borders countryside.

Habitat

- 3.25 Ellendale Environmental were instructed to undertake a Habitat Survey of the subject site and any associated lands. The Habitat report forms part of the submission and has shown that that lands are poor semi grasslands with limited vegetation and poor botanical value. Sporadic woodland has been recorded and may be used for bats but would go largely untouched by that proposed. The area is noted for pheasants and potential resting places within the burn for Otter. Neither are considered to be significantly impacted upon. There were no recording or sightings of badger, water vole or squirrels during the survey.
- 3.26 The report has outlined a number of conclusions and recommendations which would be accepted as part of any associated planning conditions.

Flooding

- 3.27 A Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) was undertaken by Kaya Flood Consultants. Their investigations have shown that the proposed development is not at significant flood risk and have outlined general mitigation measures where relevant. These would normally be expected by way of a suitable worded planning condition. The exact detail on matters, such as drainage, would also come forward in a similar fashion.

Archaeology

- 3.28 An Archaeological Assessment of the subject site was undertaken by consultants CFA. There are no listed buildings, scheduled monuments or conservation area or designed landscapes of note. There are some recordings within the wider Hallrule area but not specifically to the subject site itself.

- 3.29 The appraisal found that the proposal will have moderate potential to directly or indirectly impact on non-designated assets within the surrounding area. Therefore an agreement on the specific mitigation during any construction process is to be agreed and conditioned where necessary.

Economic Benefit

- 3.30 Bright Light Marketing have put together a tourism business report for the proposal and finds that there is a strong market demand for this proposal.
- 3.31 High end holiday rentals are popular in Northern Scotland, Western Isles and Skye, and despite their inaccessibility from major markets, have high levels of occupancy all year round. However, currently there is little provision of 5* holiday lodges/cottages in the southern areas of the Scottish Borders and it is this gap in the market the proposal seeks to address.
- 3.32 The Hallrule Farm lodges have a major advantage that the Western Isles and Skye do not have. That being easily accessible to major cities such as Edinburgh and Newcastle. While being rural in nature the site is still in close proximity of Jedburgh and the A68 which links the two cities. It also provides connection to Tweedbank train station which is a modest 30 minute drive.
- 3.33 The Borders Railway has the potential to provide significant opportunities for local businesses in the Scottish Borders and due to the close proximity to the railway our client hopes to make the most of these opportunities. As a result, they will offer their guests a pick-up and drop-off service at the station.
- 3.34 A key selling point of the proposed development will be the incredible setting within the valley together with holiday accommodation at the very highest level. Ancillary facilities such as steam room and outdoor balcony/fire pit areas all add to the level of offering.
- 3.35 This proposal will promote the use of local services and shops. Our client will showcase the best of local arts and crafts within the properties and inform their guests where they can buy these products for themselves. They will also offer food hampers upon arrival which will showcase the best of local food produce from local suppliers and encourage the use of local shops and restaurants. They will also seek to use local trades as part of the construction process.
- 3.36 Beyond the tourism business case the applicant has also provided (under private cover) further economic appraisal showing the financial justification of that proposed. The proposal fully aligns itself with the Scottish and Scottish Borders Tourism Strategy.

4. Planning Policy

- 4.1 The development plan is made up of the SESplan Strategic Development Plan 2013 and the Scottish Borders Local Development Plan 2016. Further material considerations being Scottish Planning Policy and related Supplementary Planning Guidance.

Scottish Borders Local Development Plan (2016)

- 4.2 The following policies are considered in the determination of this application:

- ***ED7 – Business, Tourism and Leisure Development in the Countryside***
- ***HD2 – Housing in the Countryside***
- ***HD3 – Protection of Residential Amenity***
- ***PMD4 – Development outwith Development Boundaries***
- ***PMD2 – Quality Standards***
- ***EP5 – Special Landscape Areas***
- ***EP 8 – Archaeology***
- ***IS4 – Transport Development and Infrastructure***
- ***IS6 – Road Adoption Standards***
- ***IS7 – Parking Provision and Standards***
- ***EP13 – Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows***
- ***EP 15 – Development Affecting the Water Environment***

- 4.3 ***Policy ED7 Business, Tourism and Leisure Development in the Countryside*** states that proposals for business, tourism and leisure development in the countryside will be approved and rural diversification initiatives will be encouraged provided that:

- a) *The development is to be used directly for agriculture, horticulture or forestry operations, or for uses which by their nature are appropriate to the rural character of the area; or*
- b) *The development is to be used directly for leisure, recreation or tourism appropriate to a countryside location and, where relevant, it is in accordance with the **Scottish Borders Tourism Strategy and Action Plan**.*

If the development falls into this category, then the following criteria will be considered;

- a) *Must be respectful to the amenity and character of surrounding area*
- b) *Have no significant adverse impacts on nearby uses*
- c) *Evidence that no appropriate existing building or brownfield site is available*
- d) *Impact of expansion/intensification of uses to rural character of area*
- e) *Meets design and siting criteria in accordance with PMD2 – Quality Standards*
- f) *Take account of accessibility issues in accordance with Policy IS4*

Where a proposal comes forward for the creation of a new business including that of a tourism proposal, a business case that supports the proposal will be required to be submitted as part of the application process.

- 4.4 As the proposal represents development of housing, albeit holiday housing, **Policy HD2 Housing in the Countryside** is also a material consideration. Regarding the economic requirement this policy states that housing that is located for business needs may be acceptable if:

- a) *The housing development is a direct operational requirement of an agricultural enterprise which is itself appropriate to the countryside and is for a worker employed in the enterprise with that worker located on site to operate the enterprise efficiently, and*
- b) *The housing development would help support a business that results in a clear social or environmental benefit to the area, and*
- c) *No appropriate site exists within a building group, and*
- d) *There is no suitable existing house or other building capable of conversion for the required residential use.*

- 4.5 As the proposed development is located outside development boundaries **Policy PMD4 Development outwith Development Boundaries** applies. This states that development may be granted if it is “a job-generating development in the countryside that has an economic justification under Policy ED7 or HD2 or a development that offers significant community benefits”.

- 4.6 **Policy PMD2 Quality Standards** is relevant regarding the quality of the development. The development will be expected to be of high quality in relation to sustainability, accessibility and design.

- 4.7 **Policy EP5 Special Landscape Areas** states that the council will seek to safeguard landscape quality and will have particular regard to the landscape impact of the proposed development, including the visual impact.

Material Considerations

- 4.8 Other material considerations include SPP, SESplan, Placemaking and Design SPG and the Scottish Borders Tourism and Strategy Action Plan.

SPP

- 4.9 The SPP provides policy information with regards to promoting rural development (linked to tourism and leisure) and supporting business and employment with key paragraphs mentioned below.
- 4.10 Paragraph 75 states that the planning system should:
- *In all rural areas promote a pattern of development that is appropriate to the character of the particular rural area and the challenges it faces; and*
 - *Encourage rural development that supports prosperous and sustainable communities and businesses whilst protecting and enhancing environmental quality*
- 4.11 A key material consideration is **Scottish Planning Policy (SPP)**. Paragraph 77 states that in rural areas the emphasis should be on “*maintaining and growing communities by encouraging development that provides suitable sustainable economic activity, while preserving important environmental assets such as landscape and wildlife habitats that underpin continuing tourism visits and quality of place*”.
- 4.12 Paragraph 93 states the planning system should:
- *promote business and industrial development that increases economic activity while safeguarding and enhancing the natural and built environments as national assets;*
 - *allocate sites that meet the diverse needs of the different sectors and sizes of business which are important to the plan area in a way which is flexible enough to accommodate changing circumstances and allow the realisation of new opportunities; and*
 - *give due weight to net economic benefit of proposed development*

- 4.13 Paragraph 105 states that planning authorities should consider the potential to promote opportunities for tourism and recreation facilities in their development plans.
- 4.14 The **‘Role of the Planning System in delivering the Visitor Economy’ Visit Scotland (2013)** is referred to as a key document within the SPP and is the first Tourism Development framework for Scotland.
- 4.15 Paragraph 2.75 states that there are some gaps in the higher quality end of the self-catering tourist accommodation market in Scotland.
- 4.16 Visit Scotland encourages development planning authorities to encourage investment in new self-catering accommodation in rural areas (where deficiencies are identified) (Action, Paragraph 2.75).

SESPlan (Strategic Development Plan)

- 4.17 The region is within one of the four Strategic Development Areas (SDAs) outlined in SESPlan.
- 4.18 It states that the Scottish Borders faces a challenging future with the continued erosion of its employment base in farming and there is a continued challenge to improve the area’s connectivity.
- 4.19 The aim of the SDP is to support the continued economic growth of the area since it is of key importance to delivering the overall SDP strategy. The quality of the natural and built environment is one of the key assets of the Scottish Borders and an opportunity to help achieve this strategy.
- 4.20 The adoption of SESPlan 2 is soon to be realised with the overall policy ethos largely mirroring that noted above.

Scottish Borders Tourism and Strategy Action Plan

- 4.21 The vision of the Scottish Borders Tourism and Strategy is:

“To grow tourism visits and spend in The Scottish Borders, through positioning and promotion as, a sustainable, year-round destination, which capitalises on its unique geography, heritage, natural environment and people”

- 4.22 A key aim is to encourage responsible custodianship of the region’s built and natural environment, scenic and wildlife assets by supporting government, local government, agencies, land owners and managers to manage and protect the region’s landscape and wildlife assets in a manner that maintains and improves the qualities of beauty, remoteness, wildness, peace and tranquillity.

- 4.23 Furthermore, it aims to maximise the opportunities to be gained from raising and improving destination profile, awareness, market penetration, and economic benefit using events as a vehicle for change.
- 4.24 With regards to accommodation, it aims to ensure the regions accommodation offerings are in direct relation to consumer demands and where opportunities are available can act as an attractor of demand in themselves.

Place Making and Design SPG

- 4.25 A final key consideration for this proposal is the Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) Place Making and Design (2010).
- 4.26 This provides guidance on the importance of achieving well designed places which can improve the social, economic and environmental well-being of our communities.
- 4.27 It sets out the key sustainable placemaking objectives that any new development in the Scottish Borders should strive to achieve.
- 4.28 The key place making and design principles include: siting of development, built character, infrastructure and access, views, sustainable development, energy efficient design, materials and the scale, massing and form, amongst others.
- 4.29 Finally, it is worth making passing reference to the: **“The Borders Railway Maximising the Impact: A Blueprint for the Future”** (2014) which aims to fully realise the economic benefits of the Borders Railway and outlines the Borders as a great destination to visit.
- 4.30 It states that The Borders Railway *“is a fundamental part of delivering our Tourism Scotland 2020 strategy and promoting growth in Scotland’s visitor economy to 2020”*. *“It will inspire more visitors to spend time in the Scottish Borders”*.

5. Planning Policy Compliance

The Concept

- 5.1 We would like to emphasise the concept of this unique proposal. Whilst there is undoubtedly high quality holiday accommodation in the Borders, there is a distinct lack of unique 5-star accommodation like this. The proposal has been designed with exactly this market in mind and has the aspiration to be amongst the very best in the whole country let alone the Scottish Borders. One would refer to the positive impact the Blue Reef Cottages have done for Harris and they themselves located in a prominent coastal landscape.
- 5.2 The proposal will offer complete privacy for couples seeking the ultimate rural escape. The client's vision is to create a feeling of serenity and space for their guests where they can completely unwind and escape from the pressures of modern life in an oasis of calm.
- 5.3 The location is absolutely central to the wow factor of the overall development but it is also vital that the building is in complete harmony with its natural surroundings too. This one being completely hidden from key public receptor points.
- 5.4 We stress that if this development is not located in this unique location the business case or ethos is lost, as it will lose pivotal aspects such as the privacy that this target market is looking for (and which is not being catered for currently in the Scottish Borders). We have undertaken a sequential review of the farm buildings and adjoining lands none of which are deemed suitable or available.

Site Location

- 5.5 Beyond the operational and locational need explained previously the applicant has shown within the 'Sequential Plan' lodged with the application the distance context with the farm steading. It shows within the central steading what each of the existing buildings are being used for. There are no vacant properties within the farm steading. All are used for farm operations. Lands to the south are shown as falling out with the applicant's ownership. Immediate fields to the north are then required for livestock during and post lambing and calving season.
- 5.6 There are no central or edge of farm steading options suitable or available. Beyond this siting high end holiday lodges, that seek to provide a peace and tranquil setting, within or next to a large active farm operation is nonsensical and does not fulfil the tourism brief.

- 5.7 The proposed location for the lodges are not only desirable, but paramount. One of the major selling points of this proposal are the views, sceneries and tranquil setting that are on offer.
- 5.8 Placing holiday cottages next to farm operations, existing buildings and/or closer to the road would significantly diminish the value of these lodges. It would also give rise to significant residential amenity issues.
- 5.9 Case Law again outlines that when considering “out of centre” sites they should be considered equal in sequential standing. Generally “out of centre” sites within the countryside may be deemed to be exposed or to have a significant landscape impact. But that cannot be applied to this proposal given the lodges are hidden within the Hallrule Valley and not visible from key public receptors or roads/paths.

Economic Benefit

- 5.10 The proposal fits with the Scottish Borders Tourism Strategy. This strategy is to increase the volume of overnight visitors in the Scottish Borders from a 50% room occupancy in 2011 to circa 62% by 2020. This aims to increase visitor overnight expenditure by 10-15% by 2020.
- 5.11 A business plan has been lodged and is supported by a feasibility study outlining significant economic benefits that this proposal would bring. Tourism is a major contributor to the economy of the Scottish Borders.
- 5.12 The Borders is a predominantly leisure tourism destination and that this proposal could contribute to the area becoming a sustainable year round destination. Sustainability is a key theme in the national tourism strategy. The proposal has the potential to compliment the built and cultural heritage priorities through the creation of a business which would safe guard a rural farm business securing its future.
- 5.13 It will establish and offer additional bed stock in an area with limited provision and the new infrastructure of the borders railway means that the demand for exceptional nature based tourism assets and adventure tourism assets has increased from both the UK and international markets. This in turn could generate an additional economic impact to the wider visitor economy.
- 5.14 The proposal will be able to take advantage of the vision set out in the ‘Borders Railway, Maximising the Impact: A Blueprint for the Future’ by offering visitors to the Borders high quality accommodation in close proximity to the railway.

- 5.15 Further to sustaining current employment on the farm it will create new employment through the construction process and in the maintenance and running of the holiday lodges. It will also invest in local business via produce purchases and the like.
- 5.16 Taking the above and relevant supporting documentation lodged with the application it is our belief that the proposal is in compliance with Policies: ED7, HD2, PMD 2&4.

Landscape

- 5.17 We appreciate the sites sensitivity being within the countryside. But again the unique positioning of the proposed lodges hidden within the valley will mean they will go largely unnoticed and will not impact on any prime agricultural land. The design of the buildings works with the local landscape and introduces softening measures such as the use of sedum roofs.
- 5.18 The limited views towards the proposed site will result in **None/Minor** adverse effect on the landscape. The greatest effects on the existing sites features will come from permanent changes to the landform, however, due to topography and being within a valley the site will go unnoticed. It is largely using a low grade grassed access route between fields with little to no benefit in agricultural terms.
- 5.19 It is considered that the proposal will have a very localised impact and will not break any skyline or viewpoints. A minor impact on the Special Landscape Area (SLA) is caused and well within the realms of acceptability.
- 5.20 The visual effects regarding the construction phase on the site is short lived and would be undertaken using best practice.
- 5.21 Policy EP5 states that proposals that even have a significant adverse impact could still be permitted “*where the landscape impact is clearly outweighed by social or economic benefits of national or local importance*”.
- 5.22 There will be no significant adverse landscape impacts and it is expected that significant economic benefits would arise from this proposal. We believe that the proposal is in accordance with the associated policies including Policy EP5 – Special Landscape Areas.

Transport

- 5.23 The design and layout of the seeks to make the entrance/exit onto the main road much safer for existing farm traffic and lodge users and create an entrance that feels as though it has not changed too dramatically.

- 5.24 It seeks to use sympathetic surface material and drainage techniques as well as hedgerow to either side to soften the paths visual impact when travelling along the main road from the north or south.
- 5.25 The gradient of the access path falls within the relevant standards and will allow for car and emergency vehicle. Refuse collection will be taken from the site access point.
- 5.26 The proposal seeks to be in line with Policy IS4 and IS6 and will not conflict with Policy EP13 Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows. Two parking spaces would be provided for each lodge and the proposal will seek to comply with Policy IS7.

Archaeology

- 5.27 Archaeology investigations have been undertaken and not identified any specific archaeology on the subject site. Should further investigations or mitigation be required by way of condition that would generally be deemed acceptable. The applicant is again happy to discuss any related aspect with the Council's Archaeology Officer and, as it stands, the proposal is considered to accord with Policy EP8.

Habitat

- 5.28 A Habitat survey has been undertaken and not identified any significant impacts. Mitigation measures are detailed and would be adhered to as part of any related planning condition. The proposal is in accordance with related policies such as EP2 and EP3.

Residential Amenity

- 5.29 The proposal will not cause any privacy, visual impact or noise issues on residential areas and therefore complies with Policy HD3. It should be noted that if the cottages were located close to the farm operations that would create potential conflict with the aforementioned policy.

Utilities

- 5.30 It is intended that the proposal will avail of local public infrastructure where possible. It will also promote renewables, such as, rainwater harvesting and sustainable drainage techniques. It is intended that watercourses will not be disturbed during the construction process and will not have a significant impact on the nearby burn. Associate standards and guidance will be followed at all times.

- 5.31 The proposal aims to support small scale renewable energy which include micro-scale photovoltaic/solar where they can be satisfactorily accommodated into their surroundings whilst ensuring that impact on the natural and built environment and upon the amenity of neighbouring properties is not significant. Techniques, such as, rainwater harvesting will also be advocated.
- 5.32 The proposal will accord with Policies: IS1, IS4, IS9, EP15 and comply with any associated planning conditions deemed appropriate.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 We believe that the proposed site offers a unique opportunity for a 5-star holiday lodge destination in the south of the Scottish Borders often neglected in terms of inward investment.
- 6.2 The application is supported by a business plan outlining the clear economic benefits. It will bolster and improve tourism in the Borders and offer high quality accommodation in the region. As a result it will play an important role in the future of the Borders tourism economy and comply with the associated tourist strategies.
- 6.3 One of the major selling points of holiday getaways are the views and sceneries that are on offer. The location was carefully chosen to offer a truly unique setting while not impeding or breaking the skyline or indeed have a significant impact on the countryside.
- 6.4 A stress free and tranquil environment is paramount to holiday getaways and this is why the proposal is modest in number and is located away from the farm operations. The sequential plan shows that there is no existing building or brownfield site available for the proposed development as all buildings on the farm are currently being used for various operations. As is the land that neighbours them. Beyond this residential amenity impacts also require to be clearly understood when locating this type of facility.
- 6.5 For the reasons outlined in this section we feel that this proposal complies with the relevant policies within the 2016 Local Development Plan and material considerations such as SESPlan, SPP and the Scottish Tourism Strategy and Action Plan.
- 6.6 The opening of the Scottish Borders Railway is a “game changer” in that it is now very accessible from major markets and cities. The site is in close proximity to the two Borders Railway Stations and Newcastle Airport and therefore can tap into the lucrative Edinburgh and Northumberland visitor market.
- 6.7 The proposal will improve the tourism accommodation offering within the Scottish Borders and as a result play an important role in the future of the Borders local economy.
- 6.8 It is respectfully requested that this application be approved for the reasons outlined within this statement and which takes due regard of the wider documentation lodged as part of this planning submission.