

## **1. POLICY CONTEXT**

**1.1** This section provides an overview of key planning policies relevant to the proposed development. Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) sets out national planning policies and is a key material consideration in the determination of planning applications. The Development Plan is made up of the Strategic Development Plan for South East Scotland (SESPlan) and the Scottish Borders Local Development Plan (2016). SCOTTISH PLANNING POLICY (SPP) 2014.

**1.2** SPP supports the creation and protection of successful, sustainable places which support sustainable economic growth and regeneration, and the creation of well-designed, sustainable places. This outcome sits side-by-side with the other three outcomes which target the delivery of low carbon places which reduce carbon emissions and adapt to the changing climate, natural and resilient places which protect and make use of natural and cultural assets, and better connected places which support and capitalise on transport and digital infrastructure.

**1.3** As a means to achieving the four planning outcomes, both policies and decisions should be informed by the principles outlined in paragraph 29. The principle of “supporting delivery of accessible housing, business, retailing, and leisure development” is particularly pertinent to the envisaged development.

**1.4** SPP creates a presumption in favour of development that contributes to sustainable development. Policies and decisions will be guided by key principles, including:

- giving due weight to net economic benefit;
- responding to economic issues, challenges and opportunities, as outlined in local economic strategies;
- supporting good design and the six qualities of successful places;
- making efficient use of existing capacities of land, buildings and infrastructure including supporting town centre and regeneration priorities;
- supporting climate change mitigation and adaptation including taking account of flood risk;
- improving health and well-being by offering opportunities for social interaction and physical activity, including sport and recreation;
- having regard to the principles for sustainable land use set out in the Land Use Strategy;
- protecting, enhancing and promoting access to natural heritage, including green infrastructure, landscape and the wider environment;
- reducing waste, facilitating its management and promoting resource recovery; and
- avoiding over-development, protecting the amenity of new and existing development and considering the implications of development for water, air and soil quality.

**1.5** In rural areas the Government intends the planning system to:

- in all rural and island areas promote a pattern of development that is appropriate to the character of the particular rural area and the challenges it faces;
- encourage rural development that supports prosperous and sustainable communities and businesses whilst protecting and enhancing environmental quality; and
- support an integrated approach to coastal planning.

### **SCOTTISH BORDERS LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (2016)**

**1.6** Local planning policy relevant to the proposal is contained within the Scottish Borders Local Development Plan (2016) Key policies include:

- **Policy PMD1: Sustainability**
- **Policy PMD2: Quality Standards**
- **Policy HD2: Housing in the Countryside**
- **Policy HD3: Protection of Residential Amenity Policy PMD1:**

### **Sustainability**

**1.7** The preparation of the Local Development Plan was heavily informed by the acknowledged “need for action on climate change” and the Council’s Environmental Strategy, which sit behind the ‘support and encouragement of sustainable development’ across the Borders. Policy PMD1 sets out the “sustainability principles which underpin all the Plan’s policies” and that the Council expects to inform development proposals and planning decisions:

- a) the long term sustainable use and management of land
- b) the preservation of air and water quality
- c) the protection of natural resources, landscapes, habitats, and species
- d) the protection of built and cultural resources
- e) the efficient use of energy and resources, particularly non-renewable resources
- f) the minimisation of waste, including waste water and encouragement to its sustainable management
- g) the encouragement of walking, cycling, and public transport in preference to the private car
- h) the minimisation of light pollution
- i) the protection public health and safety
- j) the support of community services and facilities
- k) the provision of new jobs and support to the local economy
- l) the involvement of the local community in the design, management, and improvement of their environment.

### **Policy PMD2: Quality Standards**

**1.8** The Policy sets out a range of sustainability, placemaking and design, accessibility and open space/ biodiversity requirements, whereby the proposal must:

- Take appropriate measures to maximise the efficient use of energy and resources, in terms of layout, orientation, construction and energy supply;
- Make provision for sustainable drainage;
- Incorporate appropriate measures for separate storage of waste and recycling;
- Incorporate appropriate landscaping to help integration with the surroundings;
- Create a sense of place, based on a clear understanding of context;
- Be of a scale, massing and height appropriate to the surroundings;
- Be finished externally in materials, the colours and textures of which complement the highest quality of architecture in the locality;
- Be compatible with, and respect, the character of the surrounding area, neighbouring uses and neighbouring built form;
- Be able to be satisfactorily accommodated within the site;
- Provide for appropriate boundary treatments to ensure attractive edges, and to help integration with the surroundings;
- Incorporate access for those with mobility difficulties;

Not have an adverse impact on road safety in terms of the site access; • Incorporate adequate access and turning space for vehicles including those used for waste collection purposes. • Retain physical or natural features which are important to the amenity or biodiversity of the area.

**Policy HD2: Housing in the Countryside**

**1.9** Section A of Policy HD2 addresses development proposals for housing related to existing Building Groups. The adopted text of section A has been copied below:

“(A) Building Groups Housing of up to a total of 2 additional dwellings or a 30% increase of the building group, whichever is the greater, associated with existing building groups may be approved provided that:

- a) the Council is satisfied that the site is well related to an existing group of at least three houses or building(s) currently in residential use or capable of conversion to residential use. Where conversion is required to establish a cohesive group of at least three houses, no additional housing will be approved until such a conversion has been implemented,
- b) the cumulative impact of new development on the character of the building group, and on the landscape and amenity of the surrounding area will be taken into account when determining new applications. Additional development within a building group will be refused if, in conjunction with other developments in the area, it will cause unacceptable adverse impacts,
- c) any consents for new build granted under this part of this policy should not exceed two housing dwellings or a 30% increase in addition to the group during the Plan period. No further development above this threshold will be permitted.

In addition, where a proposal for new development is to be supported, the proposal should be appropriate in scale, siting, design, access, and materials, and should be sympathetic to the character of the group.”

**Policy HD3: Protection of Residential Amenity**

**1.10** The Policy states that “development that is judged to have an adverse impact on the amenity of existing or proposed residential areas will not be permitted. To protect the amenity and character of these areas, any developments will be assessed against:

- a) the principle of the development, including where relevant, any open space that would be lost; and
- b) the details of the development itself particularly in terms of:
  - i. the scale, form, and type of development in terms of its fit within a residential,
  - ii. the impact of the proposed development on the existing and surrounding properties particularly in terms of overlooking, loss of privacy and sunlight provisions. These considerations apply especially in relation to garden ground or ‘backland’ development,
  - iii. the generation of traffic or noise,
  - iv. the level of visual impact.”

**CONCLUSION:**

The principle of development of the erection of two new dwellings is considered to be acceptable in accordance with section (A) of Policy HD2. The proposal represents the expansion of an existing Building Group by two new houses in an appropriate fashion without pushing its existing boundaries or encroaching onto the distinct enclosing landscape features which define the exterior of the Building Group.