

Peebles & District Community Council

Planning Report

May 2024

1.0 General

- 1.1 **Local Development Plan 2** – Awaiting formal adoption.
 - 1.1.1 Scottish Ministers have directed SBC to make changes to reflect the new regulatory context (e.g. NPF4) before LDP2 can be adopted.
 - 1.1.2 E.g. Insert: “NPF4 states that LDPs should create healthier places, for example through land for community food growing and allotments.”
 - 1.1.3 <https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/plans-guidance/local-development-plan/2>
- 1.2 **Tweedbridge Court** – No change
- 1.3 **Peebles High School** – Sam Coe liaising with SBC and Parent Council
- 1.4 **Baptist Church Building** – No change
- 1.5 **Victoria Park Centre** – Councillor Tatler may be able to update

2.0 Planning Applications - Current Interest

- 2.1 **Leithenwater Wind Energy Project** – Ref No: 24/00512/S36 / ECU00004619 – **Section 36 application submitted 4 Apr 2024 (see 3.2)**
- 2.2 **Scawd Windfarm** – 23/00013/S36 / ECU00002111 – No change since 28 Feb 2024. [Rt Hon David Mundell MP objected](#). [NatureScot advised 2 Feb 2024 removal of turbines 7&8 required to meet NPF4 biodiversity policy](#). [Walkerburn and District Community Council paper](#): <http://www.walkerburn.com/Scawd%20Law/Scawd%20Law%20B-1%20Feb%202023.pdf>
- 2.3 **Variation of conditions of expired Planning Permission in Principle 19/00182/PPP** – Kingsmeadows House (Granton Homes) Ref Nos: 24/00030/FUL, 24/00031/FUL and 24/00247/FUL
 - 2.3.1 [Circa 248 objections, including from this Community Council](#).
 - 2.3.2 [SBC target date for decision: Fri 3 May 2024. Decision pending](#).
- 2.4 **Edderston Farm change of use to Events Venue** – 21/01327/FUL – No change since 21 July 2023
- 2.5 **Rosetta Road Development of 100 Holiday lodges** – Ref No: 23/01564/FUL & 23/01563/LBC – Extension of time agreed to 5 June, with expected committee date 3 June 2024.
- 2.6 **March Street Mills – 50 houses and flats, demolition of mill buildings** – Ref No: 23/00884/FUL and Ref No 23/00883/CON.
 - 2.6.1 Original application was for 71 units. Now reduced to 50, with affordable housing in a separate application (see below).
 - 2.6.2 There were 19 objections including ours, 3 support comments and several general comments.
 - 2.6.3 Full permission (23/00884/FUL) still “Awaiting decision”. It appears SBC is minded to approve and working through legal agreements.¹
 - 2.6.4 Conservation area consent (23/00883/CON) granted 5 Feb 2024 (see appendix) contains the following statement:
“The proposals are considered to secure the regeneration of an important brownfield site to provide housing to meet local needs and also retain employment use at the site. The development does impact on the existing allotments however it is felt that the proposal

¹ SBC explain this process under “Release of Planning Permission” page 7
<https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/downloads/file/1043/development-contributions-legal-agreements-guidance-note>

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retains sufficient space for the allotment use at their current location in accordance with Greenspace Policy. Additional benefits will also be provided by seeking to transfer the allotment land to the Peebles Community Trust allowing the community to have stewardship of the function of the Key Greenspace.”

2.7 March Street Mills – 2 houses and 12 flats, affordable housing – Ref No: 24/00181/FUL.

2.7.1 The design statement describes this application for affordable housing as satisfying the requirement of draft planning condition 13 of 23/00884/FUL (which is “minded to grant”).

2.7.2 PCC supported this application.

3.0 New Planning Applications

3.1 24/00425/LBC; 24/00426/FUL; 24/00444/FUL; 24/00459/FUL; 24/00468/FUL; 24/00469/FUL.

Subject to PCC agreement, no action is recommended for any of these minor applications (replacement windows, interior alterations or external redecoration).

3.2 Leithenwater Wind Energy Hub – Ref No: 24/00512/S36 & ECU00004619

Section 36 application ECU00004619 submitted to Energy Consents Unit for approval by Scottish Ministers 4 Apr 2024. 13 turbines, max height 200m, 95.8MW capacity, plus battery storage. Site is 4.5km northeast of Peebles on a ridge encompassing Dunslair Heights and currently comprises commercial forestry, open moorland and sheep farming. More info <https://www.leithenwaterwindenergyhub.com>

Representations to ECU due 3 June 2024.

3.2.1 Background

Windfarm projects at Leithenwater, Scawd and Cloich have been discussed in previous minutes: Jan 2021, Sep 2021, May 2023 & June 2023, with smaller mentions July 2021 & June 2022.

NPF4 policy 11 says that wind farm proposals will be supported, but only where they maximise community socio-economic benefits. Impacts on communities, landscape, access, aviation, defence, communications roads, historic environment, water, biodiversity and forests are to be expected and mitigated.

These projects are highly technical – current application is 565 MB. Full technical appraisal is beyond the abilities of PCC. We rely instead on consultation responses from experts which assess each application. This process appears to be working well, e.g. NatureScot recommended two turbines be removed from the Scawd windfarm proposal owing to the presence of a breeding pair of golden eagles. To date, only 2 consultation responses have been submitted for Leithenwater.

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3.2.2 PCC Stance

It appears from previous minutes (confirm at PCC meeting) that PCC is supportive of windfarms:

- a) The community accepts the necessity for windfarms locally and that the expert consultation process is working
- b) PCC's focus should be on maximising associated financial benefits, with Malcolm Bruce representing PCC on Scawd Law Community Liaison Group
- c) Connection to the grid is a problem with other projects, and significant delays can occur to community economic benefits

3.2.3 Recommendations for discussion

Continue to monitor consultation responses from experts, submitting a statement of support close to the deadline listing any issues of concern which may have arisen. E.g. community council would be supportive of retaining the broadleaved woodland on site currently shown as to be felled. Are there any other items we should highlight to the public – e.g. the maximum 200m blade height?

Though not strictly necessary before the consultation deadline, perhaps now is a good time to ensure conversations are happening between the Community Councils and Development Trusts in the affected regions? Are the roles and responsibilities of CCs, trusts (any other parties?) fully understood?

Can/should we make progress towards a financial assessment of:

- a) community benefit stream £5k/MW/annum
- b) 1% ownership (offered for free)
- c) potential further ownership stake (4% at cost, more “at market”).

Recommend PCC formulate a position paper on wind farms.

4.0 Previous Planning Applications removed from this report (No ongoing interest to PCC)

- 4.1 Boundary wall and parking bay – Ref No: 24/00360/FUL & 24/00361/LBC
- 4.2 High Street Signage – Ref No: 24/00328/LBC and 24/00305/ADV
- 4.3 Erection of porto-cabin in Priorsford school – Ref No: 24/00354/FUL
- 4.4 Remove conservatory and construct garden room – Ref No: 24/00373/FUL
- 4.5 Fell 5 trees in Peebles Conservation Area – Ref No: 24/00273/TPO – This is a residential yard. One of the trees is dead. Pines are to be felled to give light to closely planted broad-leaved trees.
- 4.6 Unknown works to trees – Ref No: 24/00333/TPO – No information available on planning portal.