

Peebles Master Plan

This Draft Peebles Whole Town Development Framework (Peebles Master Plan) follows and complements publication of the Peebles Town Action Plan in April 2016. The Action Plan prioritises actions that the community can initiate in the short-term – one to five years. The Master Plan focuses on the medium to long term – five to twenty-five years – providing guidelines on the future development of the town set in the context of its historic and recent evolution and the town’s aspirations and reasonable expectations, and presented and measured in the form of outcomes. The Master Plan has been drawn up by Peebles Community Trust (PCT) following an initiative by the Royal Burgh of Peebles and District Community Council (PCC) and the Peebles Civic Society. It is available for download on www.PeeblesCommunity.org.

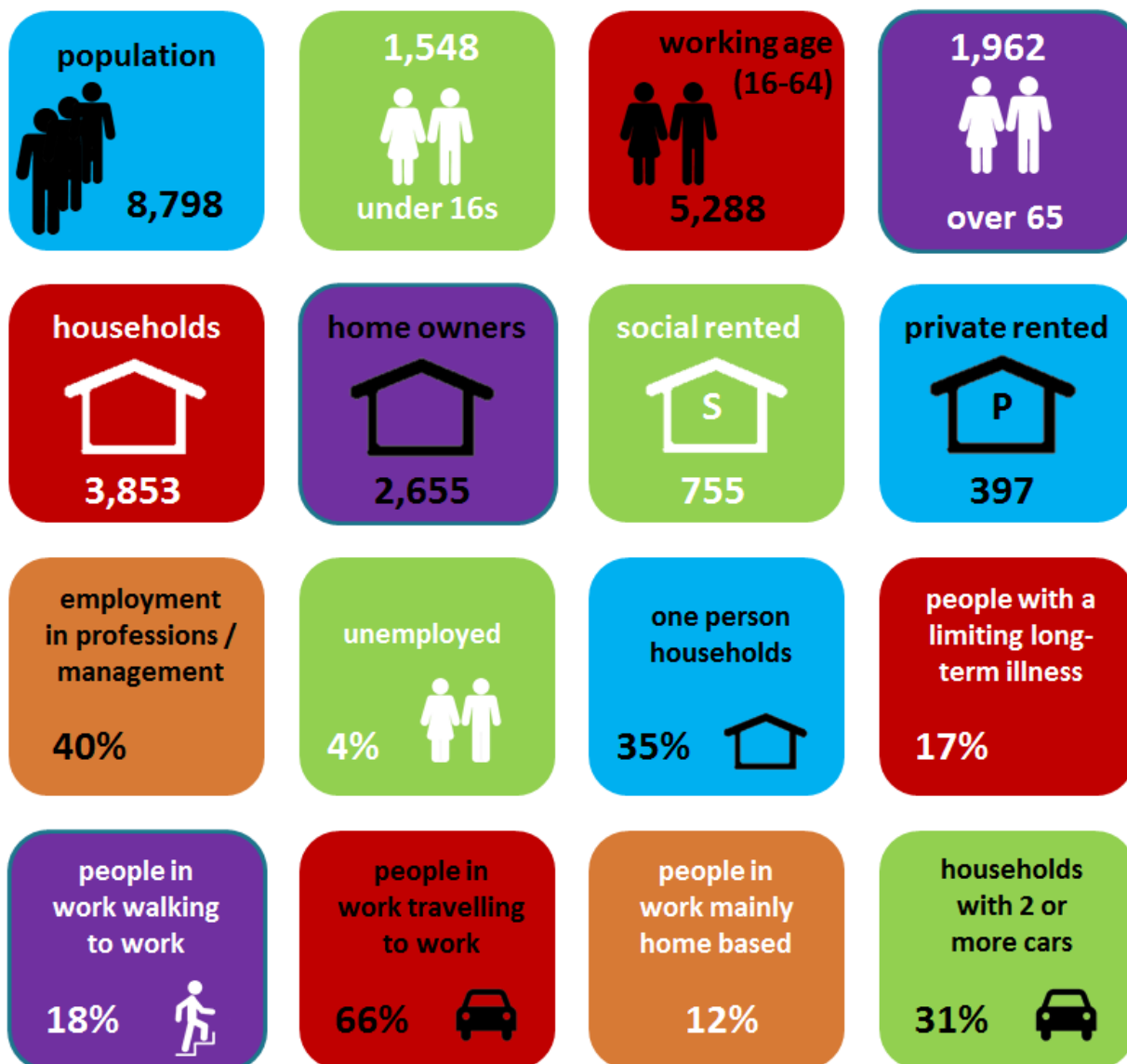
The Development Framework is designed to provide guidelines bring people together to work for the good of our town. It has involved a broad spectrum of local community groups including PCT, PCC, Peebles Civic Society, the Royal Burgh of Peebles Callants Club, The Peebles Guildry Corporation, the Tweeddale Valley Tourist Consortium, Peebles Rotary Club, and The Bridge (supporting community and voluntary organisations and other interested individuals).

These groups have a shared interest in the future of our town and its long term health and promoted a comprehensive investigation into the needs and aspirations of the town and district and its people. This involved two day-long open forums which attracted a total of more than 250 people, as well as several workshops and neighbourhood walks over a period of two-and-a-half-years.

Contents

Introduction	5
Planning for Change	8
The Vision for Peebles.....	12
Guiding Principles for future development in Peebles	17
The Character of the Town	21
Environment and Landscape Setting	25
Peebles Common Good Fund	27
Housing	29
Education	33
Health and Social Care	37
The Economy and Employment	42
Tourism	45
Getting Around	48
Community Facilities.....	54
What will happen next	58
Appendix	59

Graphic of statistics



Introduction

The principle of sustainability is at the heart of this Vision for Peebles. We are concerned that unrestricted development, whether planned under accepted standards or imposed, will have consequences which are unsustainable.

In 1997 the Government issued a Planning Advice Note (PAN 52) entitled Planning in small towns, which it defined as towns with a population of between 1,000 and 20,000. Peebles, with a population of less than 9,000, is therefore a “Small Town” as defined in that Planning Advice Note. This places it in a special category with other towns in Scotland such as Haddington and Linlithgow which, like Peebles, have a central historic core which has been added to over recent decades and is now under pressure from developers.

PAN 52 includes the following extract:-

SMALL TOWNS: A LEGACY UNDER PRESSURE

Small towns in Scotland are important from an economic, social, environmental and historic viewpoint but, in many areas, their distinctive character and quality is under pressure from:

- population change
- economic restructuring
- traffic growth
- insensitive development

All these apply to Peebles. There are particular concerns about the sustainability of existing services including care for the elderly, healthcare in general, education, sewage disposal, traffic management and parking. Further expansion of the town, without proper consideration of those issues is a recipe for the destruction of those very things which make Peebles what it is today.

At the present time of austerity and squeeze on resources, Scottish Borders Council (SBC) cannot be expected to solve all current problems or meet the challenges which unrestricted development will create. In this climate

The Scottish Government launched the Town Centre Action Plan in November 2013. This is a cross-government response to the recommendations of the national review of town centres and includes actions designed to support their revitalisation and to assist local action towards achieving this.

The principle that underpins this government initiative puts the health of town centres at the heart of decision making and encourages vibrancy, equality and diversity.

The Vision for Peebles draws together the town’s views on its future and builds on two-and-a-half years of work preparing the Peebles Action Plan. It diagnoses the health of our community, and offers prescriptions for its well-being.

there is an opportunity for local groups, businesses, individuals and SBC to come together to work with a sense of common purpose and responsibility to retain, restore, protect and enhance what is best and remove, improve or resist what is worst.

This goes beyond SBC's Community Planning Partnership (CPP). The CPP Community Planning Strategic Board consists of salaried officers and councillors. All represent something other than Peebles itself – whether it's an organisation, an institution or a political party. No one represents the community. This is the voice of the community of Peebles. It is a community that has looked at itself, described what is good and what isn't and what works and what doesn't, and offers a holistic vision of the future founded on the principle of sustainability.

The Vision for Peebles centres on the present but focuses on long term "big picture thinking". Its basic purpose is to set out the conditions which will provide for a sustainable future by building on the Action Plan study of current conditions and future aspirations based on a comprehensive consultation process. This could only be achieved by commissioning a Whole Town Action Plan, which has pointed the way to an acceptable future for the town and district following extensive public consultations.

Accordingly the Vision for Peebles reflects the views of the whole community. It aims to produce a plan for the future which is realistic and deliverable but one which also does not lack ambition. Inevitably, in a text that aims to portray a holistic, rounded, multi-dimensional picture of the Burgh there are cross-references and repetitions. Housing affects things like health, employment, education, the environment and the economy, all of which in turn affect each other. And all of which affect this Vision.

Why is the Vision for Peebles Masterplan being prepared now?

- We recognise that Peebles needs to address the challenges that arise from rapid expansion of housing, a low wage economy and high levels of out-commuting.
- We have done our homework in drawing up the Action Plan and can develop this further.
- The timing is right. SBC has just revised its Local Development Plan (LDP).
- The Scottish Government's Community Empowerment Act aims to encourage community ownership of land and buildings, and strengthen community voices in the decisions that matter to them.

What is the Vision for Peebles Masterplan?

This is all about building a sustainable future for Peebles. The Masterplan sets out how the aims and aspirations of the residents of Peebles might be achieved over the next 5 to 20 years. The Masterplan includes:

- a vision for Peebles in the eyes of the local community
- an understanding of Peebles and the influences on the town in the past and present and into the future
- practical advice on managing growth in order to promote a quality environment in which to live, work and play
- innovative ideas to make Peebles sustainable for future generations
- links to other national and local policies so that it can be fully integrated into the planning system
- flexibility that enables its proposals to adapt to changes and future reviews
- evidence of the community participation that has informed the Masterplan.

The aims outlined here have not been forced on the town by central or local government or commercial interests. They are a distillation and consolidation of the views expressed by the local community through the Action Plan drawn up from the findings of three town forums, a series of neighbourhood walks, workshops and meetings over the past two-and-a-half years.

The Government's commitment to empowering local communities emphasises the importance of engaging with planning for the future. In addition, the ability to access funds from grant-making bodies is increased by evidence that a community has carried out a detailed assessment of its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats and produced a vision of the way ahead.

Vision for Peebles Principles

Participation - involve the community in all aspects of the town's development.

Environment – protect the natural environment in and around the town and ensure that any development of the built environment is sustainable and matches the town's size and character.

Health and wellbeing – promote the development of facilities and services which support the health, safety, security and wellbeing of all residents and visitors.

Transport and access – promote environmentally friendly methods of transport, greater connectivity cross the Tweed and support well-managed traffic and parking plans.

Open for business – strengthen the economy of the town by supporting existing businesses and by attracting new businesses to the town.

Tourism – encourage and prioritise developments that enhance the town's existing and potential tourist attractions and facilities.

Planning for Change

Change is inevitable. We've seen plenty of it already. The only choice we have is how we prepare for it. Up to now we've had to respond reactively to change as it happened, with little or no influence on what happens. The result has been random growth dictated by outside and often strictly commercial influences that has created pressure on services like education and health.

Change will continue to affect our community in the years to come. Over the next 5 to 20 years the following factors over which we have little or no control are expected to affect Peebles and district:

- The population will rise from just under 9,000 at present to nearer 10,000.
- More people will be over 65 compared with now, with average life expectancy increasing to 81.5 years for men and 85.1 years for women.
- In 1991 an average of 2.4 people lived in each house. In 2011 it was 2.27 and by 2031 it could be 2.11. This is because of higher divorce rates, more people living on their own, people living longer and couples have children later in life. Already 35% of households are single person homes.
- Sea levels will rise by between one and three millimetres every year. This, together with heavier and more prolonged rainfall will mean increased flooding.
- The climate will be more unpredictable, with average temperatures increasing by up to 3%. There may be warmer, wetter winters and hotter, drier summers.
- Oil reserves will decrease and fuel costs in general will rise.
- New housing estates will be built.

Areas of potential change in Peebles

Ensuring that growth in Peebles will be sustainable is a challenge for the town and it's one we are prepared to face. We maintain that growth should be planned in a sustainable manner, not arrive in a piecemeal fashion. We need to balance housing increases with new employment and community facilities rather than simply react to commercial pressures. New jobs, better health services, more school places and improved amenities must be woven into the fabric of the town.

Change is gradual up to the point where it suddenly becomes a reality - as in the change from a mill town to a tourist destination. The change described in this Vision for Peebles may be 10, 20 or even 30 years in the making. It will require regular review.

The Masterplan emphasises the need for sites to foster and promote economic growth and attract new businesses with jobs in place of those that have been lost. We place this at a higher priority than housing, which has expanded dramatically in the last 15 years. We also recognise the need for employment sites within the town boundaries that are accessible by footpaths and cycle tracks in order to reduce the car use with its consequent pollution.

What's wrong with new housing developments?

There's nothing wrong with new housing in itself. We're not against housing developments. An expanding population brings benefits, opportunities and renewal. Our map (fig1) shows the extent of new developments in Peebles since the year 2000. It has amounted to a rapid expansion and it is

an expansion that seems to have ignored the need for additional services to meet the increased demand.

Housing on its own, without the presence or addition of the necessary infrastructure, creates imbalances and threats. SBC has outlined how it expects housing to continue to increase in Peebles, but there is little information about meeting the increased demand on services and amenities. This Masterplan will help to inform the decision-makers and indicate the kind of things we need to face the future.

At present, the High School is near capacity, local doctors say they cannot accommodate new patients in their GP surgeries, and Scottish Water warns that the sewage system in some parts of the town is at full capacity. SBC has warned that a new primary school will be needed south of the river to accommodate children from additional housing estates planned or already under construction. Other causes for concern are:

- Housing has been built, and is planned to be built, in the flood plain.
- Housing design does not incorporate climate resilience measures such as chimneys, grey water and heat exchange systems, energy generation and higher levels of insulation.
- Housing design does not reflect vernacular architecture or make sufficient use of locally available and renewable materials such as timber.
- The spread of housing without the provision of local employment threatens to reduce Peebles to a dormitory town. Already many people commute to Edinburgh. But housing developments are largely situated south of the river, increasing traffic congestion on Tweed Bridge.
- Developers prefer to build homes that will command a higher prices rather than housing that is more appropriate for a town where most local jobs are in the lower wage bracket.
- There are few salaried jobs. We think people should be able to live AND work in Peebles.

We also note that the 2007 Landscape Capability Study LCS commissioned by SBC has identified a potential new settlement area in the valley east of Cademuir Hill. This is an area we describe as the Bonnington Back Door. The study notes that it is *“relatively distant from the existing settlement, and is set apart from the town in a self-contained valley. It has the potential to be new, relatively self-contained neighbourhood of Peebles”*.

This appears to contradict one of the stated aims of the study which declared: *“Sites were only considered where they would expand the existing settlement and adjacent neighbourhoods, not where they would create a focus for a substantial new neighbourhood or a new settlement.”*

What about proposals for economic development and jobs?

Areas suitable for economic development are essential for Peebles. At present, people need to commute out of Peebles for decent salaries and come into town for low-paid jobs. The daily exodus to Edinburgh and other centres of commerce and employment threatens to create a dormitory town. Peebles currently depends largely on the retail and tourism sectors for locally-based work and the loss of 87 jobs from the closure of the Robert Noble textile mill at March Street in 2015 all but ended the historic status of Peebles as a mill town (Holland & Sherry continues to base its fabric

distribution centre in the town). It also rendered vacant a large industrial site in the centre of town. It is important that a new business or businesses occupies this site. Meanwhile the town's two main industrial estates at South Park and Cavalry Park are at or very near capacity.

Also, there is a tendency for long-vacant and historic properties like the Cross Keys Inn and Veitch's Corner to be occupied by large retail or hospitality chains. While this is welcome as a source of jobs and a solution to long-standing vacancy, it compromises the distinctive nature of Peebles town centre, which the New Economics Foundation ranked as best in Scotland for its range of independent shops and "home town identity". It also jeopardises the viability of independent retailers and takes work away from locally-based service suppliers like accountants and solicitors.

New or extended business parks would offer a number of benefits:

- Increased numbers and variety of local jobs
- A wider range of size and types of available premises
- The potential to reduce the current high level of out-commuting
- The opportunity to support locally-based start-up businesses



Fig X Scottish Borders Council Proposed Plan 2015 Peebles

- Development Boundary
- Town Centre Boundary
- Conservation Area
- Key Greenspace
- Housing
- Longer Term Housing
- Longer Term Mixed Use
- Mixed Use
- Redevelopment
- Business and Industrial
- Business and Industrial Safeguarding
- Open Space
- Structure Planting /Landscaping
- Core Activity Areas



For further information, including help reading this document, please contact: Planning Policy & Access, Regulatory Services, Council Headquarters, Newtown St Boswells, Melrose, TD6 0SA, Tel: 01835 826511. Email: localplan@scotborders.gov.uk
Disclaimer: Scottish Borders Council uses aerial information from a range of sources to produce the mapping contained within this document. The mapping is for illustrative purposes only. The aerial images should be consulted to confirm information. © Crown Copyright and database right 2015. All rights reserved. Ordnance Survey Licence number 100019473.

The Vision for Peebles

The Vision sets out to address the range of issues that affect the lives of current and future generations. It covers:

- The character of the town and its unique features
- The local environment – the townscape and landscape
- Peebles Common Good Fund
- Housing
- Education
- Health services
- The local economy and employment
- Tourism
- Connectivity – how we get around
- Community facilities - recreation and leisure

It will influence

- Education
- Health services
- Transport
- Recycling
- Renewable Energy
- Housing numbers and design
- The local economy
- Tourism
- Green spaces
- Conservation area issues
- The Town Centre
- Leisure and cultural amenities

Peebles is located 23 miles south of Edinburgh and almost 19 miles west of Galashiels and is part of SBC's Northern Housing Market Area. The settlement is located within the Western Strategic Development Area as defined in SBC's Strategic Development Plan.

The town is 170 metres (557 feet) above sea level and benefits from a dramatic setting at the convergence of the River Tweed and the Eddleston Water, framed between high hills on all sides with extensive views both into and out of the settlement. The settlement and its hinterland have high amenity value with mature woodland and spacious parkland, with substantial areas of green open space throughout the town and particularly along the water courses of the River Tweed and Eddleston Water.

The Conservation Area covers a large part of Peebles, including parts of both the Old Town and the New Town including the High Street with its rich assortment of commercial properties and churches.

The Old Town is, as its name suggests the oldest part of Peebles and includes St Andrews Church Tower and cemetery and a parade of shops. Many of the properties in the Biggiesknowe area and in the north side are one and two storey cottages of a vernacular design. In the south side of the Old Town properties tend to be tenements and commercial premises, with an urban character.

The New Town features the main town centre shopping area (High Street and Northgate) and predominantly consists of independent retailers, cafes and pubs. In 2005 it was named in a study by the New Economics Foundation as the best town in Scotland, and second-best in the UK for its range of independent shops and “home town identity”. On both sides of the High Street and the west part of Eastgate, a network of narrow passages or *wynd*s lead to internal courts that serve a large number of small premises. Of particular interest is Parliament Square, at the west end of the High Street, which is said to have been the site of a meeting of the Scottish Parliament in 1346.

The older housing to the north of the River Tweed consists mainly of terraces, semi-detached and villa style properties that were built in the 19th century. The south side of the Tweed also features areas of 19th century villas and mansion style properties. Outwith those areas are more modern developments with the most recent housing developments taking place at Whitehaugh and Kittlegary off the B7062 Kingsmeadows Road and at Violet Bank in Standalane Way.

Peebles is a small town with a big heart. With over sixty community groups - from mothers and toddlers through to the Peebles Burgh Silver Band and from the annual Agriculture Show to the Cuddy Action. There are a number of excellent organisations working with young people.

The antiquity of Peebles is seen in its name, which derives from the Brythonic word for a temporary or tented settlement – *pebyll* in modern Welsh. Its foundation therefore pre-dates the mid 6th century Anglo-Saxon conquest that made it part of the ancient kingdom of Northumbria. The earliest record notes its creation as Royal Burgh by King David I of Scotland (1124-1153). Older buildings include the restored tower and outer wall remnants of the 12th century St Andrews Church, the ruins of the 13th century Cross Kirk (once a Trinitarian Friary), and Neidpath Castle, which dates from the 14th century.

Other notable features include the 15th century mercat (market) cross, part of the Town Wall (built in 1570) , the Chambers Institute (of 16th or 17th century origin), several 17th or 18th century buildings (the Cross Keys Inn, the Old Town House, the Masonic Hall) and the tiny enclosed Parliament Square where the Scottish Parliament held an emergency meeting in 1346 after the defeat of King David II by the English at the Battle of Neville’s Cross.

Most of the buildings in the centre of town were built in Victorian times, in the 20-year period from 1870 to 1890. This forms the main Conservation Area, and gives the town its core character and its deserved reputation as a beautiful and relatively un-modernised Borders town.

There are more than 150 listed buildings in and around Peebles - from estate and mill workers cottages to rather grander town houses - including the town's unique High Street, where no two buildings are the same. **Appendix**

Vision Principles

The principles that underpin the Vision are based on the underlying foundation of sustainability and are set out in this section.

The Character of the town

The distinctive historical and architectural character of Peebles will be conserved and enhanced by

- Enforcing planning controls, especially in the conservation area
- Removing any overhead cables and their supporting poles within the conservation area
- Creating a pedestrian friendly environment
- Maintaining and repairing roadways and pavements
- Enforcing parking restrictions within the town centre
- Encouraging property owners to maintain and improve their buildings, if necessary through grant aid
- Conserving the Chambers Institute and the War memorial
- Reviewing signage and street lighting

Economy and Employment

The local economy will be stimulated by

- Promoting and marketing the unique location and attractions of the town
- Attracting new businesses, consolidating existing industrial sites and identifying new areas for commercial development
- Encouraging existing shops, offices and hospitality enterprises to raise their profile and improve their premises and services

Getting around

The network of roadways, pavements, footpaths and cycle tracks will be maintained and improved by

- Ensuring safe routes to school and throughout the town for those with mobility challenges
- Improving connections within and outwith town
- Reorganising the road network to reduce traffic speeds and through traffic
- Reducing on-street parking and ensuring all new developments have provision for safe off-street parking
- Better signposting throughout the town
- Establishing a bus station

Health and Care Services

Existing facilities within the town will be maintained and enhanced by

- Maintaining Hay Lodge Hospital and Health Centre as the principle gateway to health services
- Reviewing the services provided by Hay Lodge Hospital
- Ensuring that the widest possible range of health and social care services are readily accessible by all residents
- Establishing and maintaining increased co-operation and co-ordination within and across the health and care services.

Education

The existing educational opportunities will be maintained, and enhanced where necessary. In addition

- Land will be made available for an additional primary school south of the River Tweed
- The provision of secondary school education will be reviewed
- All amenities and facilities at the High School will be fit for purpose
- There will be adequate provision for nurseries and child care
- There will be a programme of adult education and evening classes

Housing

New housing in Peebles will, first and foremost, be designed to meet the needs of the local population, not those of property developers. This means

- A significant proportion of housing will be affordable by all ages and abilities
- There will be special provision for the elderly
- A balance will be struck and maintained between housing provision and the availability of local jobs and services
- The highest standards of environmental performance will apply through measures including energy and water efficiency, highest standards of insulation and renewable energy installations
- No building will take place within the flood plain without the provision of proven flood defences or design features that are resilient to flooding

Peebles Common Good Fund

The Common Good Fund will be improved and enhanced by

- A strategic review of the governance of Peebles Common Good Fund with a view to increased involvement at a community level
- A review of property rentals
- Transfer of the Peebles allocation of the Tweeddale Community Grants scheme

Environment and Landscape Settings

The landscape and green spaces will be protected and enhanced by

- Restricting development to the settlement boundaries as defined in the LDP
- Maintaining the Tweed and Cuddy bridges
- Securing additional green spaces where possible
- Resisting windfall developments that encroach on green space
- Preserving the surrounding hillsides from development

Community facilities

Existing facilities within the town will be maintained and enhanced by

- Appropriate investment as required
- Improving indoor and outdoor facilities
- Maintaining and enhancing cultural and entertainment facilities
- Maintaining and enhancing existing facilities for sports of all kinds

Tourism

The experience offered to tourists in Peebles and the consequent economic benefits will be improved by

- A programme of publicity, promotion and interpretation
- A review of the function and management of the Tourist Information Centre
- The creation of a Peebles or Peeblesshire Tourist Association
- A “Peebles Programme” that advertises the calendar of events in and around the Burgh
- Safeguarding and maintaining the heritage, natural scenery and amenities of Peebles

Guiding Principles for future development in Peebles

All projects, whether for new or brown-field sites, will be guided by the agreed Vision for Peebles Masterplan. In addition, designs must be attractive, functional and sustainable. This section outlines key criteria that should be considered by all involved in planning the future in Peebles. This includes SBC, PCC, the National Health Service, architects, planners, developers and land owners.

These principles are based on the industry standard for well-designed homes and neighbourhoods “Building for Life” (3rd edition, January 2015), which was drawn up by a partnership including the Design Council Cabi and the Home Builders Federation and endorsed by the government - <http://www.designcouncil.org.uk/resources/guide/building-life-12-third-edition>.

Environment and Community

There should be a good range of homes and community facilities with easy access to jobs, service and infrastructure.

- Easy access to schools, shops, doctors’ surgeries and other services
- The right mix of housing including affordable homes
- The right mix of usage – housing, jobs and community
- Easy access to public transport
- Environmental enhancement

Character

Good design makes best use of the land and creates a pleasing environment with character, identity and variety.

- Designs that are specific to Peebles – that reflect and reinforce the historic character of the town
- Exploit existing buildings and landscape
- Create a place of distinctive character
- Create a good layout where it is easy to find your way around

Design and construction

Spaces around buildings are equally important. All buildings must be fit for purpose, durable, well-built and pleasing to the eye. This means they should be a successful coordination of proportion, materials, colour and detail. All buildings should be “future-proofed” to respond to changes in social, technological, economic, environmental conditions and climate change.

- Well-designed and managed public space
- Good architectural quality
- Flexible for adaptation, conversion or extension
- Promote advances in construction and technology
- Exceed minimum legal requirement

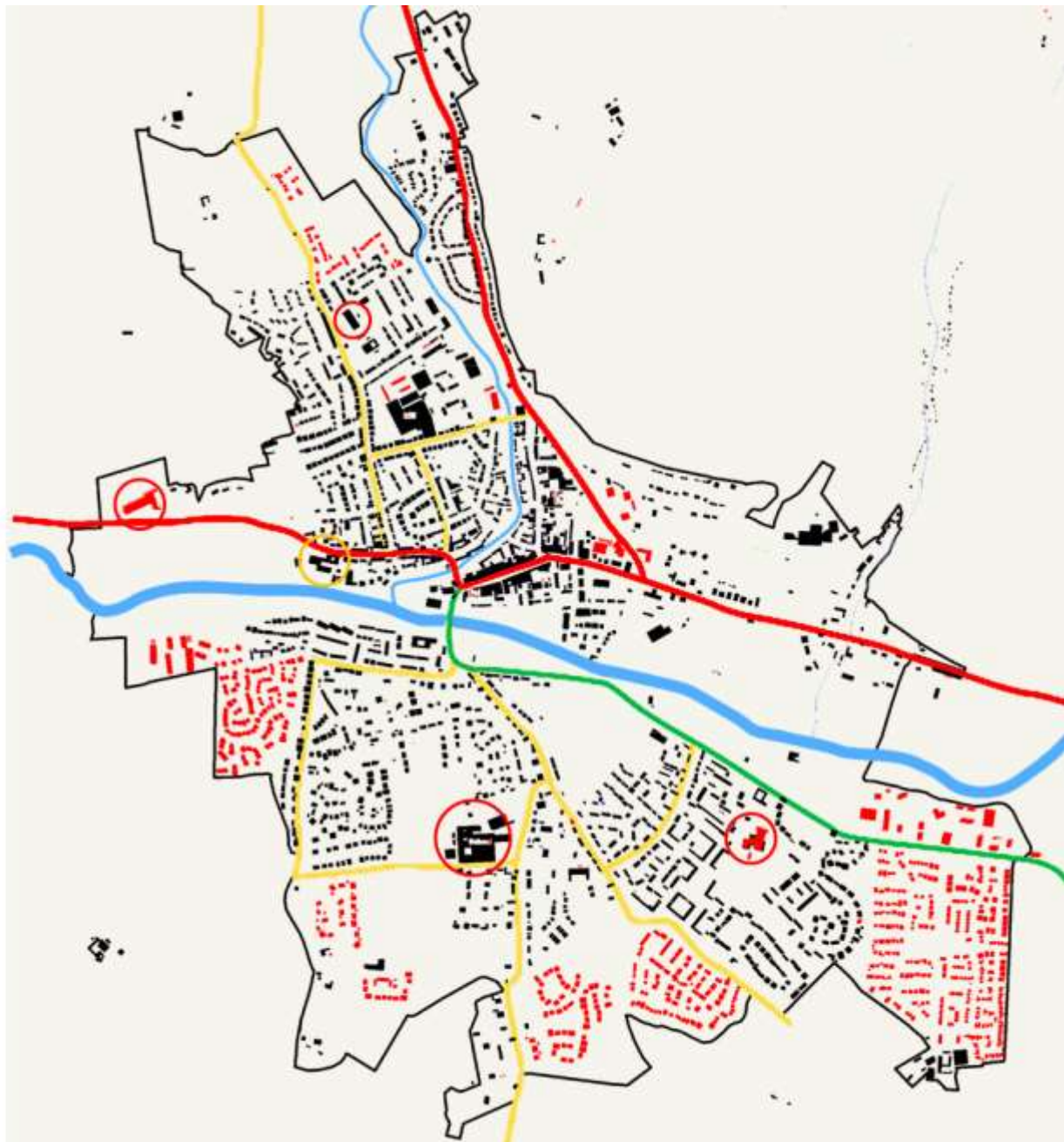
Moving around

Building layouts should help to define the streets and spaces between them. The spaces created should be attractive and user-friendly.

- Well-integrated and innovative parking areas
- Pedestrian and cycle-friendly streets
- Integrated with existing roads and paths
- Safe for all classes of users, particularly children and those with mobility challenges

settlement of Peebles

- trunk road
- secondary road
- tertiary road
- river
- settlement boundary
- ■ ■ buildings
- ■ ■ buildings constructed since 2000
- schools
- medical centre



Delivering the Vision

The standards and thresholds that we as a community consider necessary to achieve our ambitions and deliver the Vision for Peebles are set out in this section.

They are issues that have been raised by local people during two-and-a-half years of open forums, neighbourhood walkabouts, discussions and debates and it is important that they are listed and recognised as part of this strategic document.

They will require the active involvement of a wide range of organisations, authorities and individuals within and outwith the local community over a number of years. They will need investment from statutory bodies responsible for the management and development of the infrastructure and services of the area. And there will be scope for investment and initiatives from Peebles Community Trust as well as other voluntary and charitable organisations.

This is fortunately a strong community that is concerned to preserve its heritage, engage with the present, and play its part in determining the future. There are more than 100 community groups run by volunteers. They include scout and guide groups, a camera club, a floral art group, Round Table, Civic Society, Youth Trust, several mother and toddler groups and many more. They have been involved with preparing this Vision and will feature in achieving its goals.

The issues listed here are not set out in full detail. The specifics are properly left to the relevant statutory authority, the respective developer or the relevant third sector organisation. The document is an attempt to set out the issues that affect our town and to propose remedies to put things right. It is a picture of Peebles dated 2016 and a Vision of how things might be in the future. It will require continual reassessment and revision.

Some issues refer to more than one section and are therefore cross-referenced in red.

The Character of the Town

Principle – ensure that the attractive character of the town is maintained and improved

Context

Personality: Towns have their own personality and Peebles has a distinctive charm. The third largest town in the Scottish Borders is set amidst some of the finest scenery in southern Scotland. Surrounded by hills and with the River Tweed as its watery spine, it has retained its historic town centre and continues to live up to the old motto “Peebles for Pleasure” with a full calendar of entertainments and festivals.

Conservation Area: A Conservation Area covers both the Old Town, where the settlement was first established alongside the Cuddy, and the “New Town”, which itself is medieval. The Old Town includes the restored St Andrews Church Tower and cemetery and historic Biggiesknowe, the 18 century centre of the town’s hand-loom industry, where many of the buildings are one and two storey former weavers cottages of a vernacular design.

Architecture: The architecture of the New Town is varied, with no two buildings alike. Three churches dominate the skyline: the Parish Church with its distinctive crown steeple, sits on the site of the town’s former castle at the west end of the broad High Street, while the tall steeples of Leckie Memorial Church and the former St Andrews United Free Church in Eastgate, now a theatre and arts centre, decorate the eastern end. Narrow passages or wynds radiate off both sides of the High Street and the west part of Eastgate in a herring bone pattern (reflecting the dominant “rig” system that still informs the layout of the town), and lead to courtyards accommodating small shops and homes, including Parliament Square, where the Scottish Parliament is said to have met in 1346. The Chambers Institution, parts of which date from the early 17th century, is a notable feature, along with the ancient Mercat (market) Cross, a 15th century shaft topped by a four-sided sundial weather vane that date from the 17th century.

Recent years have seen historic town buildings become compromised and disused. In particular the former Grammar School at the foot of School Brae has been empty and boarded up for many years. Although notable architecturally it presents a sorry frontage to the popular recreational sward of Tweed Green. The former Sheriff’s Courthouse and prison, which date from 1848, at the western end of the High Street also requires redevelopment and revival.

Northgate: Northgate, formerly one of the main routes into town, is an often overlooked retail and commercial avenue. Principle features include the distinctive though much reconstructed late 17th century Cross Keys Inn, several early to mid-18th century houses and the classical c1840 villa Northgate House.

Housing: The older, mostly 19th century, terraces, semi-detached and villa style houses lie to the north, and there are 19th century villas and mansion style properties along the south side of the Tweed. More modern housing developments are mostly further out of the town centre, except where the sites of former mills have become residential. The last decade of the 20th century and the years of the early 21st century have brought new housing estates - primarily responding to strong demand from commuters. The most recent developments are at Whitehaugh and Rosetta. As its name suggests, Whitehaugh is located in a river flood plain. The practice of building in flood plains is deplored. We expect all future developments in Peebles to take place away from areas liable to flood.

Population: The population doubled in the last three decades of the 19th century – from 2,671 in 1871 to 5,266 in 1901, coinciding with the arrival of the railways (separate lines joined Peebles with Glasgow and with Edinburgh), and expansion of the town’s woollen mills. Further growth was

interrupted by the two World Wars, but strengthened in the 50s and 60s (although both railway lines were closed a victim of the Beeching cuts).

The population at the last census in 2011 was 8,476, including 1,542 under 15 years old and 1,954 aged 65 and over. They occupied 4,034 households, of which 35% have only one occupant. The town has the largest secondary school in the Scottish Borders, and also hosts three primary schools. In addition, the town supports three small business estates, a busy town centre retail, hospitality and office cluster, a community theatre and arts centre, modest visitor / tourist accommodation (though significant relative to other parts of the Borders), and two caravan parks.

Town expansion: It should be noted that the new housing that has powered the expansion of the Burgh has become increasingly remote from amenities and services. There are only two small corner shops outside the town centre – one in the northern settlement and the other in the southern settlement. Further, there are no pubs or restaurants located outside the town centre, with the exception of those at the Peebles Hydro and Castle Venlaw hotels.

Peebles was once a focal point of local government. It used to be the county town of Peeblesshire, with its own and Provost. In 1975 the town council was disbanded and replaced by a community council with just an advisory role. At the same time, the county of Peeblesshire was merged with others to form a two-tier local government system consisting of Tweeddale District Council and the Borders Regional Council. These were wound up in 1996 when further reorganisation created the present unitary authority Scottish Borders Council [SBC]. These changes meant loss of status and authority with a resultant loss of control and increase in the influence and effects of forces and factors from outwith the community.

Country Town: From being a regional capital and a centre of the woollen industry, Peebles is now essentially a country town and retail centre that attracts tourists and visitors. The surrounding hills and forests provide plentiful walks and country trails and, alongside the Glentress Forest Centre just outside town and the neighbouring town of Innerleithen, it is a growing for mountain biking and cycling. The Tweedlove festival brings more than two weeks of events to the area in May and there are two road cycle competitions in August. These are events with international standing that bring significant economic benefits.

Annual events: The major event of the year, and the most characteristic of Peebles, is the March Riding and Beltane Queen Festival. This is a full week of colourful events which involves the whole Burgh. Houses are decorated in the red and white Peebles colours, children of every age dress up in a huge variety of costumed characters, hundreds of horses gallop through the town and ford the Tweed and selected individuals are honoured annually. Revived in 1897, Beltane is just one of a busy programme of events as diverse as the Highland Games and special sporting tournaments, arts festivals and agricultural shows.

Recreation and Leisure: There's a swimming pool and leisure centre and some of the best salmon and trout fishing in the country. And for those with a bit more time, there are attractions like the Sware Trail that leads to the medieval Neidpath Castle and other spectacular riverside walks or cross-country on the Southern Upland Way.

Issues

1. Peebles has a classic townscape with its spacious High Street, herring bone system of wynds and quiet courtyards and architectural variety.
2. Parts of the town, particularly Northgate, would benefit from sensitive improvements and better signage directing visitors to retailers located outwith the High Street.
3. The town is expanding largely because of pressure for new housing from the government and from housing developers. There is a danger that the settlement limits will begin to creep up the

hillsides that form the distinctive and attractive landscape bowl where Peebles was first established.

4. The current planning system fails adequately to address the cumulative impacts of new housing on the character of the town and is compromising the features that make Peebles a unique and attractive place to live and work.
5. The standard design of new housing ignores the built heritage and streetscape. They could be anywhere.
6. The Beltane Festival and other events organised within and outwith the town either by commercial interests or by local community organisations add character to the Burgh and have an unrealised economic potential.
7. The conservation area is important in preserving the historic integrity of the town centre.
8. The wide variety of style and designs that make the vernacular architecture so attractive and provides such dignity to the town centre should be used as a template for developers operating in the wider townscape.
9. A sustainable future for the redundant or underused buildings like the former grammar school at the foot of School Brae and the Courthouse should be fully supported.
10. Size is an important part of the character of Peebles. If it gets too big, its character changes. Something can be lost that can never be restored.

Standards and thresholds

Requirements:

Townscape: The integrity of the town centre and settlement limits shall be maintained. Changes to town centre frontages will adhere to existing designs. Encouragement and support will be given to the occupation of empty properties by appropriate traders or enterprises, with preference given to independent businesses.

Conservation Area: The conservation area is supported and maintained. We expect new buildings within the settlement to be of high architectural and design merit with features that reference or contrast with local vernacular design. Off-the-peg designs are discouraged. Developers will be expected to recognise the character of the settlement they wish to exploit and respond to the wishes of the community as expressed in this document. Long-term empty or compromised buildings of historic and/or cultural importance shall be secured and brought into use - if possible. The condition of such unused or under-utilised buildings should be investigated to ascertain their potential.

Tourism: We expect to achieve improved economic benefit from the extensive programme of events that takes place within and outwith the town centre. Peebles needs a programme of marketing and publicity to add value to its busy calendar of festivals and events. Increased economic exploitation of the character of Peebles with its wealth of historic sites and significant architectural heritage should not compromise its integrity. There is no reason for it to do so.

Tourism currently creates the most economic potential and the industry is squarely based on the character of the town and its surrounding countryside. Efforts will be made to maximise the economic benefit of the Tweedlove Festival and other events hosted by the town. Discussions will include representatives of a new Burgh tourist association, the community council and community trust, the civic society and other interested organisations.

Housing: The climate appears to be changing, bringing more extreme weather conditions including floods. Peebles straddles the river Tweed and, as we have seen during the winter of 2015-16 is vulnerable to inundation. We expect an immediate halt to developments of any kind within the flood plain, unless protected by appropriate flood prevention measures. In addition, expansion of the Burgh should not exceed the current settlement limits of the town nor extend beyond the 200 metre

contour. We expect that any new developments will effectively be infill within the development limits as defined in the LDP. We do not expect the Burgh to be inappropriately expanded by the creation of a detached and un-serviced neighbourhood in the region of the Bonnington Back Door.

Peebles Civic Society has done much to secure and enhance the character of the town since its formation in 1973. This followed a successful campaign to prevent the total demolition of the historic Bank House at the west end of the High Street, a building closely associated with the author John Buchan and his sister Anna Buchan, who wrote under the pen name of O. Douglas. Much of the building remains, including the famous red door. Since then the society played an active role in promoting the Burgh, including publishing a series of guides, booklets and an appraisal of the conservation area, staging exhibitions, organising competition and planting trees. We expect continued cooperation between the society, the community council and community trust, SBC and other authorities and institutions to the benefit of the Burgh.

Environment and Landscape Setting

Principle – *to protect and enhance the landscape and green spaces and restrict development to the settlement boundaries as defined in the LDP.*

Context

Location: Peebles has a dramatic setting where the Eddleston Water, known locally as the Cuddy, joins the River Tweed. It occupies a bowl formed by high hills on all sides and the town itself benefits from acres of mature woodland and spacious parkland. North of the Tweed the town reaches into the slopes of Ven Law and onto the flatter land to the west of the Eddleston Water towards Jedderfield. South of the river the town lies within the flatter haughland or flood plain of the river valley and onto the lower slopes of the Cademuir Hill. The first photographs show that the surrounding hills were then bare, but they are now brindled with smaller or greater stands of commercial forestry and woodland, some of which is Common Good property.

The setting is one of the principle qualities of the town and one reason why it is such a popular place to live and visit. We expect the setting to be preserved or enhanced. In particular, the hillsides, which can be seen from all parts of the town, should remain open countryside and protected from urban spread.

Riverside: A key characteristic of Peebles is the town's relationship to the river Tweed. This forms a central focus to the settlement pattern with open space on either side offering green corridors that are much-enjoyed as leisure and recreational amenities. There are children's playgrounds on either side and a series of bridges help to maintain settlement cohesion and easy access to the retail centre from the south.

The River Tweed is popular with anglers and no effort must be spared in maintaining its status as one of the best salmon and trout rivers in Scotland.

Sleepy Town: "As quiet as the grave – or Peebles," joked an 18th century wag. The 2006 Pevsner architectural guide to the Borders thought this sliver of wit might still apply, but warned that ease of access by road and "an insatiable demand for new housing" threatened to turn Peebles into a suburb of Edinburgh. It's maybe an exaggeration. But over 500 houses have been added to Peebles since the year 2000, and provision has already been made for more than 500 more. We expect developers to refer to the vernacular designs when preparing plans for new development rather than continuing to construct inappropriate identikit properties.

Windfall Gentry Estates: Two former Gentry estates are being partly developed for housing. The former mansion at the 19-acre Kingsmeadow is being converted. And 130 units are proposed on part of the 103-acre Rosetta Caravan Park, which was earmarked for housing in the revised LDP as a "windfall development" – that is a site not specifically allocated for housing that has nevertheless been granted planning consent for residential development. This is regretted and has caused much controversy and disquiet. The non-housing areas of these two sites should at the very least be protected from inappropriate or unsustainable development. The Kingsmeadows estate in particular has potential as an added recreational and tourism-related asset for the town. Recent efforts by Peebles Community Trust to purchase some of the land were unfortunately unsuccessful. Rosetta House is a Grade Two listed building dating from 1806 that was built for a member of the expedition that brought the Rosetta Stone to Britain. It is also a potential green space and visitor attraction.

Issues

1. The attractive setting of the town needs to be protected from development on the surrounding hillsides. Development should not normally exceed the 200-metres contour.

2. The green spaces and parklands shall be protected from development and extended where appropriate.
3. The bridges across the river Tweed and the Eddleston Water or Cuddy are a vital element in ensuring the integrity of the settlement and its accessibility from all areas. One or more of the bridges are too narrow for people to pass easily.
4. Better and attractive signposting would benefit residents and visitors alike.
5. The empty school building at the foot of School Brae could contribute once again to the townscape. We understand there are structural issues.
6. Opportunities to enhance the environment should be taken whenever possible – for example securing all or part of the Kingsmeadows and Rosetta House estates for community use.
7. New buildings should reference the vernacular architecture of the town except for excellence in contemporary design that will contribute to and enhance the settlement.

Standards and thresholds

Requirements:

The landscape and setting and the vernacular architecture should inform all developments. We expect there to be no developments of any nature on the surrounding hillsides. The hillsides lend character and amenity to the settlement. We expect the LDP to be revised to include a restriction on development up the hillsides above the 200-metres contour in order to preserve the integrity of the landscape setting. We expect no development in the Bonnington Back Door identified as potential development in SBC's Landscape Capability Study [LCS]. This is described in the LCS as the "wide valley which extends east of Cademuir Hill towards the low hills around Haystoun immediately south of the town".

Signposting: Access to all notable features and recreational amenities such as children's play areas, footpaths and cycle tracks will be improved by signage. A review of signposting throughout the settlement should be carried out by a team that includes someone new to the area in order to ensure that it is effective for visitors and tourists as well as local people.

Bridges: We expect the bridges across the river Tweed and the Eddleston Water or Cuddy to be maintained in good condition and widened where appropriate.

Peebles Common Good Fund

Thanks to the efforts of successive generations, Peebles has wide expanses of open space, particularly Tweed Green and Ninian's Haugh, Hay Lodge and Victoria Parks and Peebles Golf Course. The wide sports area around the Gytes, Kerfield Park and Whitestone Park was also once part of Peebles Common Good Fund, acquired, consolidated and managed by successive generations of the Royal Burgh of Peebles. But the Common Good Fund was removed from local control by successive local government reorganisations. In 1996 it passed to SBC, which now administers a total of eight Common Good Funds. These have a total value in 2012 of £9,849,000. Peebles Common Good Fund has a current paper value of £1,317,074 in cash and assets, and a current return of some £30,000 a year available to support organisations and events in the town.

All the elected members of SBC are trustees of all eight Common Good Funds within the Scottish Borders and are responsible for their management. The six Tweeddale councillors, four of whom live in Peebles and two in Clovenfords, Galashiels, make up the Peebles Common Good Fund Working Group. The Working Group deals mainly with applications to the Fund for financial grant aid. They have a duty to ensure that the Peebles Fund is managed in the best interests of the inhabitants of Peebles, not in the best interests of Scottish Borders as a whole. Peebles Civic Society has been making representations to SBC about Peebles Common Good Fund, particularly about the composition of its land and buildings asset list, since 1999. Peebles Community Council has worked with the civic society to pursue aspects of the management of the Peebles Common Good Fund. There are particular concerns over the apparent transfer of land around and including the Gytes from Common Good to SBC.

Issues

1. Opportunities to augment and enhance the Common Good Fund will inevitably arise from time to time.
2. There are questions over the classification of land and buildings in Peebles Common Good Fund. If property is not correctly classified as Common Good it will not be managed solely in the interests of the inhabitants of the area to which the Common Good related prior to 1975.
3. The rentals of some property assets of Peebles Common Good appear to be well below current market values.
4. Current and proposed wind turbine power stations have community benefit funds which result in annual revenue returns to local communities affected by the turbines. Peebles is currently set to benefit from a total of four wind farms if current planning applications are approved.

Standards and thresholds

Peebles benefits from the efforts of previous generations in securing land and property for the common good of the town. These add significant value to the character of the Burgh. We expect every effort is made to preserve the existing parklands and green spaces and every opportunity taken to secure, enhance and add to the green spaces in and around the town.

We expect land and buildings within the Common Good Fund to be protected within the fund. We note that Kerfield and Whitestone Parks and the Gytes were formally Common Good assets that were transferred out of the Fund to SBC control, in spite of objections locally, in 2009. We consider this unsatisfactory and contrary to the spirit of the Fund. We expect this land, and any other asset removed in a similar fashion, to be restored to the Common Good Fund. We expect the trustees of the Common Good Fund to be alert to the potential to augment and enhance the Common Good assets.

We also believe the Fund should to be repatriated as far as possible. The community council should participate in the strategic direction of the fund, and exercise some control over grants from the fund revenue. We expect the local community to be able to say what types and sizes of grants should happen. We also expect the Tweeddale Community Grants scheme to come under the control of the Peebles Common Good sub-committee. These changes are in line with the principle of community empowerment promoted by the Scottish Government, although we note that such moves are not explicitly covered by the legislation.

We expect a strategic review of the governance of Peebles Common Good Fund with a view to greater involvement at a community level through the community council.

Housing

Principle – ensure that any development of the built environment is sustainable and matches the town's size and character

Context

Architectural Vernacular: Peebles is recognised for the high quality and individuality of its built environment. The former weavers cottages of Biggiesknowe and the 18th and early 19th century villas such as Kingsmeadows House, Rosetta House and Kerfield House established a pattern and a quality mostly taken up by locally based builders in the Victorian era. It created a vernacular that makes Peebles highly sought after as a place to live and an attractive place to visit.

Housing Expansion: The town is just 23 miles south of Edinburgh or around 50 minutes away by car and about 70 minutes by bus. It is the third largest town in the Scottish Borders. Still a small town in planning terms, our map (Fig 1) shows how new housing developments have made it much larger since 2000. All settlement areas in the vicinity have seen the rate of housing developments slowing down since 2014, but in Peebles it has accelerated.

More than 500 new homes of mostly undistinguished character were built in the first 15 years of the 21st century. Few “affordable” homes were built in the ten years to 2005 but since then a total of 114 housing association homes have been developed. There remains an acknowledged need for more truly affordable homes for local people. Affordable housing for purchase is defined by the Lower Quartile Resale House Price Value. The latest available figures, from 2007, range from a flat costing £70,000 to a detached house at £190,000. Developers prefer to build higher-value homes. With employment in Peebles characterised by low wages, that means most of the new housing accommodates newcomers.

Unfortunately, very few houses or public buildings constructed in the last 70 years display features that warrant special public recognition, and the strong demand for property in Peebles is no argument for supporting the design and construction of buildings that bear no relation to the vernacular. Whether they are for social housing, low cost housing, or five bedroom executive properties, too many residential, commercial and public buildings of the later years of the 20th and those of the 21st century have on the whole reduced rather than enhanced the character and environment of the town.

Issues

1. The rate of new housing development is increasingly out of alignment with the capacity of town infrastructures to deliver core community services.
2. Windfall sites are constantly emerging to add to locations identified in the LDP. One example is the proposal for 130 houses at Rosetta Holiday Park.
3. Over-rapid development of the settlement is reducing the quality of lives of town residents.
4. Asymmetric development of the town footprint is dislocating parts of the town from the settlement centre and from key infrastructures (such as access to the doctor and social services) and the sense of community.
5. Continued expansion of the settlement will require the creation of satellite retail, hospitality and economic centres away from the current town centre. Yet such consideration does not feature in any strategic planning for the town. Either the future development of the settlement footprint should be clearly limited, or a larger settlement should be planned for. Creeping expansion of the settlement footprint is the worst of possible outcomes.

6. The current planning system has failed adequately to address the cumulative impacts of new housing on the town's physical, social and economic infrastructures and is devaluing the very features that make Peebles a unique and attractive place to live and work
7. The design of new housing is generally standard modern, neither providing linkage to the built heritage and history of the town and the area, nor embracing innovative features, materials or technologies in ways that add to the built environment.
8. It is accepted that the quality of the built environment affects general well-being and the way that people behave. The absence of imaginative and innovative approaches to creating buildings and space diminishes the quality of life.
9. Opportunities to capture or utilise more sustainable approaches to energy conservation and energy generation are being missed or simply ignored.
10. The cumulative impacts of new housing development on transport infrastructure, connectivity, and permeability do not currently form a relevant planning consideration, and opportunities to incorporate improved off-road pedestrian and cycle infrastructure are being missed.
11. The long-term risks of flooding to current and future residential development are not being sufficiently prioritised in terms of strategic development, water management, and planning consent.
12. Insufficient attention is given to incorporating grey water systems in new house builds, and in actively reducing the extent or use of impermeable surfaces in and around housing and other town infrastructures.
13. There is insufficient genuinely "affordable" housing in Peebles, despite the application of SBC policy that 25% of new house builds should be affordable.
14. The expansion of the settlements south of the river in housing estates like Whitehaugh and Kittlegairy is creating a suburb distant from amenities and services in the town centre.
15. Development of the Bonnington Back Door (the valley extending east of Cademuir towards the hills around Haystoun), identified as having potential for housing in the SBC Landscape Capability Study would dramatically expand suburbanisation.
16. Scottish Water says the sewage system is at maximum capacity and it cannot approve any housing development north of the river until capacity has been increased. Scottish Water is of the view that development in that area will only be possible from 2017.

Standards and thresholds

Requirements:

Houses should not receive planning permission or be constructed out of alignment with the capacity of essential infrastructures to accommodate such housing – schooling, medical (GPs and treatment), dentistry, sheltered housing, social services (mental health, care in the community, day centres, dementia), affordable housing, local employment opportunities, local and town centre parking, pedestrian and cycle networks, and public transport.

Design: We expect new buildings to be of high architectural and design merit with features that reference or contrast with local vernacular design. Peebles has suffered from mediocre off-the-peg in-house designs that neither reference the local built environment nor incorporate memorable design, technology or materials. In addition, new buildings should be innovative, and incorporate features and technologies that conserve energy and limit the use of scarce resources. New housing estates should incorporate strong sustainability features such as:

- communal heating systems
- grey water systems
- built-in renewable energy systems
- effective management of flood and surface water
- common play areas
- access to off-road pedestrian and cycle paths
- segregation of vehicular access and parking from pedestrian and cycle areas
- provision of generous green space and access to green space, tree, shrub and plant plantings that improve the visual and functional characteristics of the development whilst enhancing water retention.

Energy efficiency in older homes: In addition the Victorian housing stock, which is largely energy inefficient, needs to be upgraded. Much of this earlier housing is in the town's conservation area, which tends to compromise or at least delay, efforts to upgrade to energy efficiency and/or install energy generation. Installation of energy conservation measures and renewables such as solar panels that do not affect the character of the conservation area should be positively encouraged and grants made available for the purpose.

Infrastructure Pressures: The rapid expansion of Peebles, particularly over the last two decades, has compromised the maintenance and capacity of the town's physical and social infrastructures and it's getting worse. Health and education services in particular are under stress. The current situation is unsustainable, and has resulted in year on year reductions in the quality of life of town residents.

Planning consent for additional housing should not be approved unless it is clearly demonstrated that the impacts of such development can be accommodated within the existing capacities of the town's infrastructures, including medical services, care and social services, schools, and connectivity, in addition to the more established planning conditions of power, water, drainage, parking, and roads capacities.

Developer Contributions: SBC should not reduce the requirement for community contributions in response to developers who say that such contributions might compromise expected profits. The profit motive should never over-ride the needs and expectations of the local community.

Multi-use network: Peebles straddles the Tweed River and the Eddleston Water, and its townscape incorporates generous green space and riverside access, as well as a system of paths that access the countryside and hills that provide its setting. Any housing development should protect and enhance the natural townscape setting, protect its open and green spaces and riverside walks, and improve connectivity – particularly for pedestrians and cyclists.

Flooding Issues: Peebles was founded at a historically important fording point, and the settlement is largely constructed on the slopes of the natural floodplain of both the River Tweed and the Eddleston Water (the Cuddy). Only limited housing, such as Tweed Green, was constructed within the "haugh" (lands of the floodplain). But a significant proportion of more recent, 21st century, and planned housing expansion, is located on the haugh. This is simply unsustainable. Flood mitigation will now be needed to "protect" these homes, and it is vital that no further construction should take place in the floodplain unless accompanied by proven flood protection characteristics. We expect the issue of flood defence to become a higher priority in strategic planning at a whole-town as well as a neighbourhood level.

Bonnington Back Door: The 2007 Landscape Capability Study [LCS] commissioned by SBC has identified space for a potential new settlement in the valley east of Cademuir Hill - an area we

describe as the Bonnington Back Door. The study notes that it is *“relatively distant from the existing settlement, and is set apart from the town in a self-contained valley. It has the potential to be new, relatively self-contained neighbourhood of Peebles”*. This contradicts the stated aim of the study only to consider sites where they would *“expand the existing settlement and adjacent neighbourhoods , not where they would create a focus for a substantial new neighbourhood or a new settlement.”* We expect the Bonnington Back Door to remain free of housing developments that would become in effect a new settlement.

Windfall Sites: Peebles Civic Society has expressed concern over the emergence of windfall sites that will add nearly 250 additional units of housing to those specified in the LDP. The society says this is *“an unreasonably high proportion of windfall development”* and calls for *“tight control to be adopted for the future of Peebles in order properly to manage the future growth of the town”*. We support these views and expect SBC to respond appropriately. Regardless of the estates of houses favoured by developers, there is demand at all levels of the market, for serviced plots for the design and building of properties by individuals. Recognition of such demand should be included within the LDP.

Education

Principle – ensure that the provision of education of quality at all levels including pre-school and adult education matches the needs and expectations of the community

Context

Peebles High School: Peebles is widely recognised for the quality of secondary education provided by the High School. It's one reason why young families want to come here to live. The 2011 Census showed that adults in the Peebles community are highly educated, with a significantly higher proportion than in Scottish Borders or Scotland as whole educated to degree level or with a professional qualification. The proportion with no or low qualifications is correspondingly lower. The higher proportion educated to SCE Higher Grade level is indicative of the success of Peebles High School in producing school leavers with high attainment levels. In 2013 the school was ranked 28th highest of the 361 secondary schools in Scotland for Higher Exam passes. The High School is a comprehensive school catering for 12 to 18-year-olds from the former county of Peeblesshire, including the three primary schools in Peebles.

An HMI inspection of the High School in 2011 noted that, *“Unsatisfactory facilities have seriously hampered staff in providing high quality physical education.”* This was rectified in 2014 with the opening of a £4.8m development with both indoor and outdoor pitches alongside a fitness suite and a general hall.

The state of the High School campus is the biggest concern. | During an open forum on the issue, one former pupil who later taught at the school declared that it has *“never been fit for purpose”*. This may be an exaggeration but it is clear that there are problems, particularly with the Science Block, located in the former Bonnington Academy building of 1858, and the Maths Tower. After a visit to the school in 2015, community councillors described the Maths Tower and science laboratories as *“inadequate and unsatisfactory”*. The maths tower is the most urgent. One argument against locating the proposed 3G pitch on the rugby field was the presence of a draft plan to relocate the maths tower there – evidence that SBC is aware of the problem. The Science Block is short of the equipment needed for physics and biology. Eight out of 20 Sixth Form students have had to attend weekend courses elsewhere to carry out experiments to meet the requirements of their advanced courses. Students whose parents have not been able to afford the cost have missed out. The school also needs a dedicated Additional Needs department. Students currently have to use two classrooms.

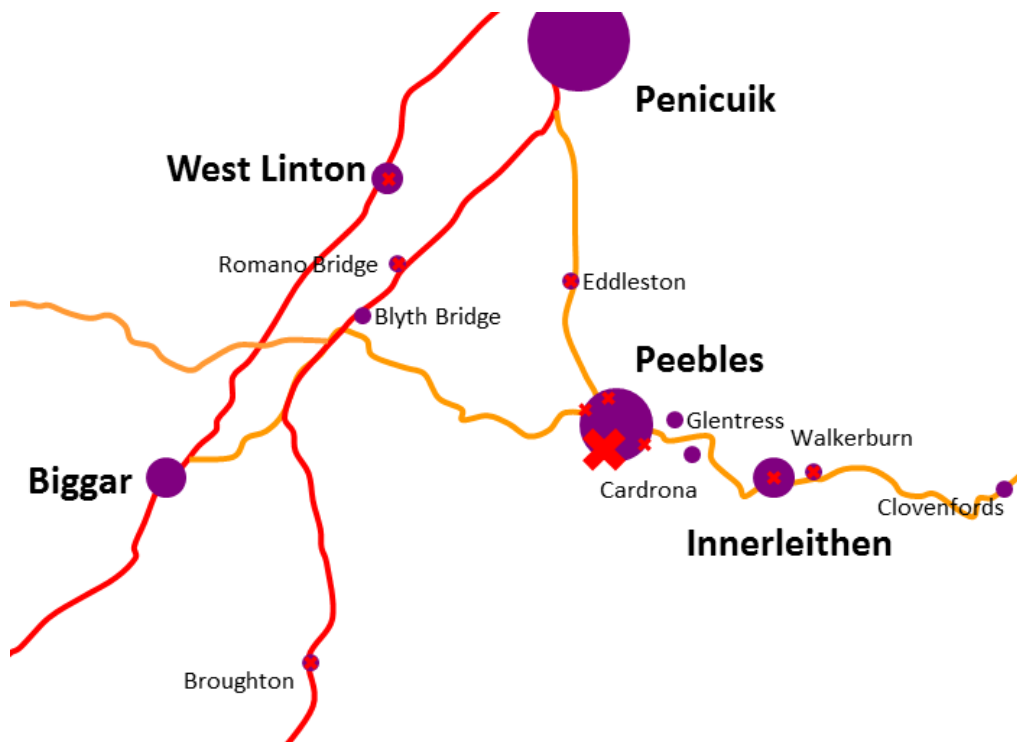
There is an evident need to replace some of the fabric. Unfortunately SBC's 10-year capital budget for 2015 includes no allocation for Peebles High School. Some observers believe that a completely new purpose-built school is needed, but that is probably 15 years away at the earliest. It may be necessary to call on council reserves in order to produce a temporary solution in the form of mobile classrooms or portable cabins.

Longer-term measures are needed to avoid serious overcrowding with an inevitable effect on standards and attainment levels. Reducing the catchment area or developing a separate Sixth Form college on an adjacent or alternative site are solutions that have been suggested. The longer term future of the High School is an issue that SBC must consider as a priority.

Vocational Education: It is a matter of regret that vocational education has been neglected in the continuing trend to prepare young people for exam success rather than life itself. This is not the fault of teachers. They are compelled to operate according to tenets laid down by government. We expect education as a whole to be as good as possible. But we also expect it to respect the principle embodied in the original Latin roots of the word; *educare* means "to draw out that which lies within" – not simply concentrating on filling it up. We expect young people to be equipped adequately to succeed as adults and make the best use of their individual talents for the benefit of the wider community.

Box X – Feeder primary schools to Peebles High

Peebles High School takes pupils from nine primary schools within its catchment area. Current enrolment relative to school capacity is tight in all schools with the exceptions of Halyrude and Eddleston primary schools.



In the attached graphic the size of town / village disks is proportional to population. The main long-distance roads are shown in red, and the main routes associated with Peebles are shown in orange.

Education for Life: Education should prepare students for the outside world as well as progressing through academia. There appear to be no basic lessons in handling personal finance. Instead students are left to avoid the many potential pitfalls and navigate this complicated road without a map and with only (uncertain) parental advice for guidance..

Primary Schools: *Kingsland* Primary School was enlarged with pupils from Elcho Street school and modernised in 1974, before being relocated to a new site on Neidpath Grazings in 2010. The school was recognised as the Best Educational Building Design in Scotland in 2011. It now accommodates 382 pupils.

The distinctive early open-plan **Priorsford**, opened in 1972 amidst new housing on to the north-east of the urban settlement off Kingsmeadows Road has 400 pupils.

And **Halyrude**, now a Roman Catholic school of 73 pupils relocated from the Halyrude site to the former Kingsland School in Rosetta Road. This Grade B listed building also accommodates Rosetta Playgroup and the Tweeddale Support Centre for additional needs children, but there is room for an additional 60 pupils.

Additional Primary School? SBC's education director states: *"If [housing] development continues and school capacities are pressured further, a second primary school on the south of the river in Peebles will be required."*

More Children in Peebles: Census returns reveal a higher proportion of children and young people in Peebles than in the Scottish Borders or across Scotland as a whole. The continuing popularity of Peebles for housing among estate developers and asset managers suggest that this will continue to be the case.

Capacity Issues: The Director of Education and Lifelong Learning at SBC says there are now severe capacity issues in all of the Peebles Primary Schools and that the High School will face *"some capacity issues"* from 2016 onwards. This reflects the pace of new housing developments across the catchment area. The school is already close to its capacity of 1,397 for the reasons outlined above. In September 2016 the intake from primary schools is expected to number around 250 pupils – the biggest ever – to take the number of students to 1,244. The school roll is expected to reach 1,350 by 2020. SBC figures show that spending per pupils is the lowest in the Scottish Borders.

Issues

1. Continued housing development could compromise the quality of education it provides. If housing developments continue as forecast a new primary school will be required south of the river.
2. The High School science laboratories and maths tower are condemned as *"inadequate and unsatisfactory"*.
3. Vocational education is neglected or even ignored. This creates a skills gap that a general lack of apprenticeships cannot bridge and effectively fails to help the non-academic, but not necessarily non-gifted individual. In addition, no effort is made to prepare students for handling their own financial affairs when they leave school.
4. The demand for adult education in the form of evening classes and weekend courses has been overlooked.
5. The school buildings are not generally used outside school hours for evening classes.
6. The cost of using the sports facilities at the schools tends to rule out their use by the wider community.

Standards and thresholds

Requirements:

Fit for Purpose: The infrastructure and quality of education at all levels should be fit for purpose. Class sizes should be at an appropriate level for the subject matter. If students have to travel outside the Burgh to access facilities or equipment necessary to meet the demands of their courses we expect the cost to be borne by the school. We expect all our schools to be capable of delivering a full curriculum within its own campus. That includes vocational education and appropriate classes in handling money.

High School Problems: We expect an early resolution of the problems in the Maths Tower and Science Block, both condemned as “*inadequate and unsatisfactory*”. It is evidently wrong that only students whose parents can afford it are able to carry out the experiments needed to meet the requirements of their advanced courses. If pupils have to go elsewhere to receive appropriate education they should not have to pay the cost. This is unacceptable and should be remedied at the earliest opportunity.

High School Development Strategy: A development strategy for the High School is an urgent priority. It should consider the size of the catchment area and the possibility of relieving the pressure on the High School by developing a Sixth Form College. The issue becomes more relevant and urgent should housing developments continue at the current pace. Plans to reorganise secondary education in the Peebles catchment area should become a priority agenda item.

Learning for Life: Learning is for life. But vocational education is absent, along with basic lessons in handling personal finance. This is not to suggest expanding the already crowded curriculum. Instead some adjustment is needed to provide a more holistic education that equips the individual for adult life rather than for passing exams. Of course, learning should not stop at the school or college gate. But few evening classes or weekend courses are available in the town, despite the ready availability of space both in schools and other community venues. There is a branch of the University of the Third Age (U3A), and a range of *ad hoc* courses, talks and lectures, but there remains unsatisfied demand. Discussions should be opened with evening class providers on the use of school facilities at a reasonable cost.

Sports Facilities: Similarly, school sports facilities could be made available to the wider community, bring cost benefit to the facilities as well as increasing their availability. The school 2G pitch, for instance, is available for use but the cost is prohibitive. Border Sports and Leisure Trust [SBLT], a charitable organisation, operates and manages sport and leisure facilities leased from SBC, which also transferred its the Sports Development Services and the Active Schools Team to SBLT in 2011. We expect amenities paid for by taxation to be used as widely as possible.

Health and Social Care

Principle – *promote the development of facilities and services that support the health, safety, security and wellbeing of residents and visitors.*

Context

Hay Lodge Hospital and Health Centre is the main gateway to the National Health Service and family doctor practices in Peebles. The hospital has a single 23 bed ward, and provides acute medical care for the elderly, terminal care, convalescent care, respite care and rehabilitation, for both in-patients and day care. Hospital staff provide round-the-clock minor injuries services, and support a GP treatment room and consultant-led clinics for medical, surgical, orthopaedic, ophthalmology, gynaecology, ante-natal and obstetrics services. Other services are now provided by the Borders General Hospital [BGH] near Melrose, more than 23 miles distant.

The hospital used to have two wards. Ward one on the ground floor catered for longer-term patients while Ward Two on the first floor handled acute situations. Now there is enormous pressure on bed space and on the availability of ancillary services such as physiotherapy. Several rooms are empty or under-used.

Hay Lodge has the potential to meet current expectations for a cottage hospital. This potential is unfulfilled, but at least it makes general health care and services to be available and accessible to all residents and visitors. NHS Borders is currently undertaking a review of its services across the region. It hasn't ruled out closing Hay Lodge Hospital or any of its three other community hospitals, but neither has it ruled out expanding rather than contracting local service provision.

The Hay Lodge medical centre accommodates two medical practices, with combined complement of 14 GPs and support staff and facilities. But both GP surgeries are said to be at capacity, and some patients say they find it difficult to secure an appointment with their chosen doctor. A review could benefit staff and patients and should investigate what other services and procedures could be provided on the same premises.

In addition it will be noted that most of the housing development in recent years has been to the south of the river with the largest estate on the outskirts of the settlement along Kingsmeadows Road. There is a bus service into town but not a direct link to the hospital itself. Patients from this area therefore often travel in by car, and there is limited parking space at Hay Lodge. One solution might be to investigate additional parking. An alternative solution might be to establish a branch of one or both GP surgeries south of the river.

There are three dental surgeries, located at High Street, Kingsmeadows Road and the Calvary Business Park, representing a reasonable geographical spread with resultant ease of accessibility.

The town has a reasonable provision for sheltered housing and a good variety of informal resources for older people, including a lunch club and a social centre provided three days per week by RVS. The only residential provision for older people is a privately run 28 bed nursing home. The recently opened Extra Care Housing at Dovecot Court is a valuable addition to resources but those who require residential care, e.g. those with dementia unable to support their own tenancy, now have to move outwith the town. The floods on 30 December 2015 that led to the evacuation of Peebles

Nursing Home and its expected closure for nine months drew attention to the shortage of such facilities in the town. The residents had to be relocated to Galashiels 18 miles away.

Box X: Peebles is served by a range of health and social care facilities and accommodation

There is a range of care and health facilities in Peebles, ranging from drop in centres to care homes, a rural hospital facility to sheltered housing. In addition, a number of social landlords operate affordable housing. These are illustrated in the attached graphic.



Firholm day centre in Innerleithen Road is an NHS facility for sufferers of dementia. There were previously day facilities for those with mental health needs in Priorsford House on Tweed Green but

it was closed. And a monthly drop-in 'Dementia Café' for those with dementia and their carers run by Alzheimers Scotland has now also closed. The reduction in provision for sufferers of dementia and related conditions means they are now either accommodated within sheltered housing, which offers inappropriate care for the condition or as previously stated, they have to move outwith the town. In addition, people suffering from psychological issues, whether from longer term mental illness or unexpected and sudden crisis-related conditions have difficulty accessing help when it's needed.

A former day care centre at Victoria Park is hardly used, though its therapy room still contains potentially useful equipment. SBC used to operate a bus to take people to day centres but that has been stopped because of cuts.

The Peebles Locality Social Care and Health Team assesses need and coordinates care for older people but, as with all other Local Authorities, there is severe pressure on their budgets and therefore on the resources available to support people living at home. As a result waiting lists for services are long and only those with critical needs are likely to get a service.

There is little in the way of preventative measures and general health education. Rooms at the Firholm day centre and Hay Lodge are unused in the evening and could be used for this purpose.

Issues

1. The central issue is a need for greater co-ordination within the health and social care system. Despite the establishment of the Scottish Borders Health and Social Care Partnership, under the Scottish Government's legislation-led Health and Social Care Integration initiative, it remains the perception of local people that the NHS and SBC's social care department operate independently. There is also a perception that those working within the services, and within the third or voluntary sector, hardly communicate – and have little time to do so.
2. Hay Lodge is the fulcrum for the NHS in Peebles. Closure would create a crisis in health care provision in the Burgh.
3. Better and extended use of the facilities at Hay Lodge Hospital could make available additional procedures– as might be reasonably expected from a rural cottage hospital.
4. There are reported problems with the GP appointments system. There seems to be a need for improvements to the phone system.
5. The small car park at Hay Lodge is invariable full, creating problems for those with mobility issues.
6. The newest housing estates south of the river are remote from GP surgeries.
7. New housing developments are placing many elements of the health and care services under stress. Enrolment with the existing surgeries is near capacity.
8. An ageing population requires more resources and we need to increase the range of choices that older people have, not reduce them. . Following a relatively recent reduction in the number of beds at Hay Lodge, in line a local policy to favour home care, the hospital is subject to increasing

pressure to accommodate long-term elderly patients. With repeated forecasts of increased flooding in the future, the privately-run Peebles Nursing Home could be more frequently compromised.

9. Mental illness sufferers are isolated and feel unable to access help and treatment. This *Cinderella* sector is in need of attention.
10. Elderly people suffering from dementia and related conditions need specialist care.
11. GPs are independent. Their status is the same as that of an accountant or solicitor: they are contracted to provide a service. In practice they are the gateway to the NHS a link between the NHS and the care system, but they are part of neither. This anomaly ultimately undermines the possibility of achieving a fully integrated system.

Standards and thresholds

Requirements: We expect the full range of health services to be available through the NHS or from private sources. People should be treated and cared for at home or in a homely environment within their own community, regardless of their condition or disability. We expect people suffering from dementia to receive the specialist care they need separately from other elderly people. Care in the community at present is not good enough. There are gaps in provision that effectively increases the vulnerability of those who need help.

A worrying absence of joined-up thinking in the health and social care systems has fortunately been recognised at government level through the Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014. The creation of the Borders Health and Social Care Partnership seeks to address the problems of a system that is fragmented and confused. Neither the NHS nor SBC are to blame. Repeated top-down reorganisations have been imposed from central government, often for political reasons, that have concentrated on management structures at the expense of service provision. We expect an integrated health and care system that is fit for purpose, meets its full potential and gives value for money. At present it falls short. We welcome the Draft Borders Health and Social Care Partnership Strategic Plan 2016-19 and look forward to seeing the proposals contained therein bearing fruit.

Hay Lodge Hospital is the gateway to the NHS for most people. It is conveniently situated within walking distance of the town centre and some of the newer homes as well as much of the older houses. We expect the hospital to be maintained and well-equipped.

We also expect the Hay Lodge centre to be much more effective and to deliver a wider range of services and treatments. We expect this potential to be investigated so that more services and procedures are available and fewer patients have to travel to BGH. This would also ease pressure on BGH. But if they do have to travel to BGH we expect a regular bus service from Peebles direct to the hospital. This was cut for a spell last year. We expect it to be maintained.

We have noted that NHS Borders is currently engaged in a review of service provision. Any reduction in service provision at Hay Lodge would be a retrograde step with many adverse effects for the local community. Instead we favour a review that focuses on improving and expanding the services provided at Hay Lodge. The review should also consider reopening the second ward. This would help problems at BGH which regularly experiences a shortage of available beds.

We expect people who need to see their doctor to be able to make an appointment. Too many people have complained about the present system and we expect their concerns to be addressed. Consideration should be given to establishing a new or satellite surgery south of the river.

We expect those suffering from chronic or acute mental illness to receive appropriate care and treatment when the need it. This is not a matter that should be left for volunteers from the third sector, family or friends to deal with. Senior NHS executives in England have pointed out that properly funded mental health services are an essential part of taking pressure off acute hospitals. This is an issue that should be tackled at government level but failing that we expect this to happen as part of the Borders NHS review.

The Economy and Employment

Principle – *strengthen the economy of the town by supporting existing enterprises, attracting new businesses and provide better paid employment within the town.*

Context

The Mills: Until the 1960s the production of tweed was the main manufacturing industry of the town. But this finally ended with the closure of the March Street mill, with the loss of 87 jobs, in 2015 (Holland and Sherry continues to operate a distribution facility from the town). The company had been operating in the Scottish Borders since 1666. This large site, which also includes some allotments, is now vacant and it is feared the buildings will be demolished and the site developed as housing. This must not be allowed to happen.

Business & Industrial Sites: Peebles has just three business and industrial sites, with a single LDP proposal to extend one of them – the South Park estate. The future of the smallest of the sites – alongside March Street Mill – is unclear, as this is currently designed for redevelopment. Several businesses that moved to Peebles relocated here when Cavalry Park was established, attracted by the facilities as well as the appeal of the local area. This pattern could be repeated if more units were available. There is also demand locally for small start-up sites.

Jobs: The main sources of revenue and employment now are the retail, tourism and service sectors. A study by the New Economics Foundation ranked Peebles the best in Scotland in 2005 and second-best in the UK for the range of independent shops, and retail therapy continues to attract visitors despite the closure since then of several long-standing businesses. The occupation by famous brands in 2015 of the Cross Keys Inn and Veitch's Corner, two distinctive independent enterprises that closed down some years ago, is welcomed but could become a trend with worrying implications for the distinctive nature of the town's shopping experience. Several other local retail enterprises also closed in 2015 and it is anticipated that more brand names will arrive in the near future.

Added Value: Locally run enterprises add value to the local economy and employment by using services like solicitors and accountants and sourcing products available nearby and employing local people. This compares positively to national chains, which use services close to their headquarters or even abroad. Most of every pound spent in local shops and on locally-based services stays in the locality while 75% spent in supermarkets and chain stores leaves the area. The Saturday market established in Eastgate by Peebles Can is an excellent example of a retail facility encouraging and benefiting locally-based food producers.

Statistics: The 2011 Census shows that around 70% of the 6,272 16 to 74-year-olds in the Royal Burgh of Peebles Community Council area are economically active, although the nature of their economic activity indicates a pattern of underemployment and lack of accessible full-time work that is typical of rural economies. Rates of part-time employment and self-employment are higher than average, as people find alternative ways to make ends meet, either due to personal choice or due to a lack of full-time employee jobs. The sizeable economically inactive community in Peebles is mostly due to the relatively large proportion of retired residents. Youth unemployment rates are low as young people tend to leave the town to look for work rather than remain unemployed in the community. The unemployment rate amongst workers aged 50 to 74 is extremely high, indicating a need for investment in employee jobs for the older workforce. A higher proportion of these are long-term unemployed than the Scottish Borders and Scotland averages.

Working here: Efforts are also needed to attract new business enterprises that would offer more and better paid jobs. There's a tendency now for people to commute out of town for better paid jobs and commute in for lower paid work. There is a hidden economy of some 150 sometimes high tech businesses, some trading internationally, that operate from home, often in ignorance of each

other. A new traders association and a business directory are needed to connect local enterprises with each other and help to take advantage of government incentives. Networking will pay dividends.

Starting up: There's no shortage of people with ideas. But there's a lack of small business units to enable entrepreneurs of all ages to set up and grow a small business and encouragement, advice and training to help them on their way. High Street business rates are also prohibitive to someone starting out.

Issues

1. At least part of the March Street Mill should be reserved for industrial and / or commercial enterprises.
2. Efforts should be made to encourage existing businesses from outwith the Borders to expand and relocate to Peebles. Cavalry Park was successful in attracting businesses to relocate. This is a pattern that can be replicated – but there needs to be sites available for them to move to, which is not currently the case. Land is available to extend the South Park industrial estate.
3. Reviving the Peebles Traders Association would benefit established and new traders.
4. The independent character of the retail sector should be preserved. Independent retailers bring added benefit in that, unlike chains, they use locally based accountants, solicitors and other service providers.
5. There is potential to increase the range of wet weather and other attractions. These would add value to the town as a tourist venue. There is potential at Neidpath Castle, and in extended museum and art gallery space at the Chambers Institution and other locations.
6. Buying local boosts the local economy. The Saturday market organised by Peebles Can should be fostered and encouraged. Is there scope for a "Peebles Pound"?
7. There is an urgent need for a start-up hub for small business enterprises. Scottish Enterprise has one such facility in the Borders – in Selkirk. The March Street Mill sites could provide an answer.
8. Women returning to work after childbirth face a dearth of childcare facilities. There is a shortage of day nurseries. Scottish government cash support for pre-school children increases from the current 800 hours of childcare to 1,100 in 2017 but many women in Peebles may not be able to take advantage.

Standards and thresholds

Requirements:

March Street Mill Closure: The closure of March Street Mill in 2015 brought an end to an enterprise that had existed on the site since 1884. This was a serious blow, especially for the 87 people who lost their jobs. It also meant the end of an industry that had powered the 19th century growth of the town. We expect the March Street Mill site to be developed for industrial and/or commercial purposes. This will require a survey of the site and a programme of appropriate redevelopment.

Attracting New Businesses: We expect to see the launch of a campaign to attract a business or businesses to relocate to Peebles. Peebles is well-known as an attractive place to live; it's why there

is pressure from housing developers to build homes here. We anticipate that a business or businesses would be happy to relocate to the Burgh. Scottish government reform of local authority funding encourages councils to boost economic growth in order to benefit from increased income and we expect this to act as an incentive for active efforts to persuade businesses to relocate here.

Room to Grow: We note that there is already pressure for space in the three existing business and industrial sites but only plans to extend one of these is included in the LDP. We expect a future review of the LDP to make provision either to extend more of the sites or seek a location for an additional one. People should be able to live and work in their own community.

A Traders' Association: Enterprises would also benefit from pooling their knowledge, resources and experience by creating a business and traders association.

Buy Local: Shopping and trading locally makes your money go further in the local economy.

Tourism

Principle – encourage and prioritise developments that enhance the town’s existing and potential tourist attractions.

Context

Tourism has been a mainstay of the town for many years.

Peebles for Pleasure: There is plenty to attract a steady stream of visitors. Aside from a handsome town centre, the old saying “Peebles for Pleasure” resonates through a calendar of annual events and festivals, a lively theatre and arts centre, museums and art galleries and a plethora of arts and crafts shops. Most of this can be found in the town centre. But there is much besides. There is a splendid 18-hole golf course, fishing on the river, and expanding network of off-road multi-use paths and delightful walks alongside the river and by ancient drove roads into the hills, which are full of scenic, geological and historical interest. Plans to install lights in the old railway tunnel on the north bank of the river Tweed will save walkers picking their way along a rocky and often slippery slope and open up the path for other users. Other attractions to explore in and around the town are too many to mention but include Neidpath Castle and the Dawyck and Kailzie botanic gardens. However there is a shortage of wet or inclement weather amenities and facilities for visitors and tourists.

Adding Value: Much added-value can be gained by promoting the Peebles experience to tourists and visitors and more efforts must be made in this direction. Tourism has become the bedrock of the local economy and it’s essential to build on it. A report carried out on behalf of the former Peebles Traders Association in 2007 revealed a huge untapped potential among mountain bikers and golfers. Accommodation providers are already tapping into the golf market but a growing numbers of bikers bypass the town and head straight for the facilities at Glentress, where the Forestry Commission has produced a draft Master Plan for its development. A similar exercise is needed for Peebles, along with a revived Peebles Tourist Association and fresh publicity material to promote and interpret the area. It’s hard to remember seeing a leaflet or guide book advertising tourist attractions in Peebles. It may be possible occasionally to come across one advertising one of the hotels, or Glentress. Peebles needs to up its game.

Outdoors: A new tourism sector has opened up in more recent years. Cycling, mountain biking and walking bring different kinds of people to the town, along with a challenge to offer the sort of facilities and amenities they need. There are several retailers already servicing this sector. We need to be supportive of efforts to develop the sector further. But there remains an imbalance between the number of cycling and mountain bike activities and events focussed on the town and the facilities available to them.

Tourist Information Centre: The Visit Scotland Tourist Information Centre is no longer meeting the needs of the town. It has the most visitors of Visit Scotland’s five TICs but the lowest booking rate for connecting visitors with accommodation. That function has largely been made redundant by the fact that most bookings are now made through the internet. The resultant drop in revenue has persuaded Visit Scotland to increase its stock of mostly generic and souvenir products with few of these relating directly to Peebles or even the Scottish Borders. The TIC has become little more than a shop competing with other traders in the generic souvenir market. Both the function and management of this centre requires a rethink.

Visitor Parking: There is constant abuse of the parking areas along both sides of the High Street. There may be an opportunity to increase the number of parking areas in the town centre by making use of a small strip of land along Tweed Green between Port Brae and Tweedbrae, to significantly

increase access to shops and public toilets for shoppers and visitors. We note that SBC is currently reviewing parking arrangements throughout the county.

Issues

1. A programme of publicity, promotion and interpretation would add value to the tourism industry.
2. Visitors staying at locations outside the town need to be made aware of its attractions and are encouraged to explore.
3. The Tourist Information Centre is now little more than a souvenir shop. More should be made of its function as an aid for visitors, for example as a small satellite for the town museum.
4. A Peebles or Peeblesshire Tourist Association could become a dynamic player in the local tourist industry with a tourism “brand” for Peebles. A “Peebles Programme” would advertise a calendar of events that visitors can use and take away in order to plan a return visit. There is scope for a town attractions leaflet for distribution to all other tourist and visitor attractions in the area and beyond.
5. Safeguard and maintain the beautiful natural scenery and amenities of Peebles.
6. The emergence of Peebles as a Mecca for cyclists is a reminder to continually review the reasons why people come to Peebles and to develop our tourism to make them welcome.

Standards and thresholds

Tourism is Tops: Tourism is one of the most important industries in Peebles. This status was emphasised by the final demise the woollen manufacturing industry. But aside from the efforts of volunteers in Peebles Civic Society and advertising by separate hospitality enterprises, little is done to promote the attractions of the burgh. The tourist information centre does not take full advantage of its High Street location and misses out on the opportunity to exploit the potential of the tourist industry in Peebles.

Tourism Association: We expect tourism-related enterprises to join forces in order to promote their businesses within the context of Peebles itself. The Tweed Valley Tourist Consortium has a wide brief and Peebles tourism operators should play an active part within that body, but we expect those enterprises based in Peebles, whether or not involved with the consortium, to develop a distinctive identity.

Adding Value: The town has become a favoured location for events organised by outside organisations and enterprises. The Tweedlove cycling festival organisers estimated that the event added £1.1 million to the local economy and Tour o’ the Borders added another £500,000. An online survey of riders showed that 88.4% planned to return to the area as a direct result of the event. Events such as these are under-exploited. A Peebles tourism or visitors association would help traders and other businesses to maximise the potential from events such as these, which are likely to grow in future years.

Cyclists come principally for their sport, but many also want to make use of the pubs, cafes, restaurants, hotels, B&Bs and other hospitality services. They will also have time to explore the surrounding countryside and its many attractions. Some of these are barely exploited at present. For example, discussions with Wemyss and March Estates Management Co Ltd could lead to improved

public access to Neidpath Castle. It may be that volunteer guides would be available for weekends or for specific days in season when the castle is not in use for wedding reception or other functions.

Guide Books: Visitors and tourists will also be able to enjoy a fuller experience of Peebles and what it has to offer if there is a printed guide book. There is currently nothing apart from Civic Society publications such as the excellent Town Walk and the Bridges of Peebles handbook. The society also has an excellent website packed with information for visitors. More publications would help visitors, retailers and tourism enterprises. The pre-World War Two Town Council produced a formative and interesting 68-page A5 Official Guide, which included a map and a variety of advertisements and the former Peebles Tourist Association produced a 20-page duplicated A4 guide (costing 10p) in the 1970s. This is another matter that could be investigated by a revived Peebles tourist association. We expect visitors and tourists to be able to enjoy exploring the burgh and its attractions through a range of attractive and informative leaflets and other literature.

Wet Weather Attractions: There is a need for more wet weather attractions. Aside from the swimming pool and the health spas at Stobo Castle and the Hydro there is little for visitors to do other than shop, eat and drink during bad weather.

Getting Around

Principle – ensure that connectivity is fit for purpose with safe roads, cycle tracks and footpaths free from blockages and congestion

Context

Main Road Approaches: The A72 and the A703 are the main approaches to Peebles. Neither route is a trunk road, and therefore they are maintained by SBC, with all its budgetary problems rather than the Scottish Government. The A72 is a major east-west artery connecting Galashiels to Hamilton, Lanark and Glasgow. It runs right through the High Street. The A703 from Edinburgh joins the A72 at a roundabout just south of the High Street. The A72 has problems in both directions: to the east at Dirt Pot Corner just east of Cardrona and to the west at Neidpath Castle Banks Corner. The section of the A72 from the west, through Old Town and the High Street, is affected by cars and service vehicles parking – and sometimes double parking – in the High Street, where the road surface is in a poor state of repair. Road surfaces generally are showing the effects of budgetary constraints.

Town Streets, Pavements and Paths: The network of roads and footways within Peebles developed piecemeal to service the town's rapid development in the second half of the 18th century. It evolved during the age of the horse and cart and is no longer fit for purpose. There are blockages where road traffic becomes congested or comes to a halt during peak periods and there are gaps in the network of safe walks to school. Pavements can be too narrow for pushchairs and mobility vehicles, which can also be affected by a lack of appropriately located, or even a complete absence of, dropped kerbs. Some roadways are effectively one-way streets because parked vehicles restrict traffic movement to a single direction. The housing developments at Peebles Gait and subsequent increase in traffic will make matters worse in Rosetta Road. A similar problem affects Caledonian Road, where the emergency services are based on the former railway station yard. Parking restrictions, if respected, could solve the problem, but are not considered appropriate as these are residential areas. The surfaces of roads and pavements in general are frequently distressed with potholes and crumbling tarmac. Access along the bank of the Tweed at Riverside Home needs to be improved.

Pathways in and out of Town: There are excellent long-distance walking and cycling routes towards the town along former railway lines from the east, west and north but they come to an abrupt halt when they reach the settlement. People with mobility issues, parents with pushchairs and children with bikes and scooters are blocked on the riverside walk on the north bank of the Tweed by what is known locally as the "hump" at the rear of Hay Lodge House. This is a safe route to school as well as a popular recreational traffic-free path. Current plans to install lights in the old railway tunnel will improve connectivity in the multi-use network. The Burgh needs to cater for the needs expressed by cyclists in the town centre, especially now that organised cycling events and festivals take place in and around the town. Walking and cycling should in general be for reasons of health and leisure. Sustrans is extending its main route through the Borders and the organisation could be a partner or lead actor in a review of the multi-use path network and the non-motor traffic linkages.

Bridges: A second Tweed bridge – a major and contentious issue – is needed to ensure easy and rapid access to the north of the river for emergency services and to service the major expansion of housing that has already taken place to the south-east of the town. SBC has suggested three routes for a new bridge and asserted that no further development should take place in the south-east until it is built. None of the suggested locations are ideal and alternatives should be considered west and further east of the town. SBC is in the process of assessing a new Tweed bridge through a Scottish Transport Appraisal.

SBC says a new bridge is also needed over Eddleston Water at Dalatho Crescent as part of proposals to build new housing at Rosetta Holiday Park. This is also highly contentious, both from issue of

housing at a site that currently accommodates visitors, and because of SBC's statement that a route – and bridge - will be needed from the Edinburgh Road to service that housing through what is at present a quiet residential area.

The early 18th century Manor Bridge on the parish boundary with Manor was recently repaired. It is single track but might possibly be reopened for motor traffic. A case could also be made out for a new footbridge east of the Priorsford suspension bridge over the Tweed to offer a safe route from the new housing developments along Kingsmeadows Road with the main sports complex at the Gytes.

Community Transport: SBC used to operate a mini-bus to enable people with mobility issues to access treatment and attend day centres. This no longer exists and such individuals now rely on family and friends or on the community transport scheme operated by The Bridge. This resource is important for a significant number of people who might otherwise find themselves isolated and housebound.

Public Transport: Buses serving the town itself and settlements or services elsewhere currently load and offload passengers outside the Post Office in Eastgate. This can cause congestion. Buses that terminate in Peebles park overnight in a reserved area adjacent to the Edinburgh Road car park. This space could be improved and extended to form a town bus station, relieving pressure on the High Street.

Issues

1. Main Road Approaches
 - Consider trunking the main road approaches to Peebles.
 - Neidpath Castle Banks Corner and Dirt Pot Corner are particular areas of concern.
 - Resurfacing would benefit the A72 High Street section.
 - Parking on west approach to High Street and High Street requires regulation and enforcement. Parking on A703 approach to Peebles also requires attention.
2. Town Streets, Pavements and Pathways
 - Streets and pavements are poorly maintained.
 - One way options would improve traffic flow.
 - Parking in residential areas remains an issue.
 - Street and footpath lighting should be reviewed and the bridge lights restored.
3. Pathways in and out of Town
 - Multi-use dimension to be considered with particular regard to safety.
 - Condition of pathways.
 - Extension of pathways.
 - Improved connection of pathways.
 - Walking and cycling are worthy of promotion for reasons of health and recreation.
 - Better signage would increase connections to the footpath network in the countryside.
4. Bridges

- Tweed Bridge is only crossing for all motorised town traffic. If reopened for motorised traffic, Manor Bridge could offer an alternative.
 - The location of new Tweed bridge is seen as necessary to safeguard ingress for emergency services based south of the river and open up land for new housing developments.
 - A new bridge is proposed across the Cuddy as part of the planned Rosetta Housing development.
 - There is a case to be made for new footbridge east of the Priorsford suspension bridge.
 - Any new road bridges should include safe multi-use lanes for the use of pedestrians, horse riders and cyclists.
5. Residents should be encouraged to leave the car at home and make use of public transport.
 6. A campaign is needed to recruit more volunteers as community car drivers.
 7. A bus station would offer a transport hub for the town and relieve congestion in the town centre.

Standards and thresholds

Requirements:

Main Approaches: We expect the main approaches to the town to be fit for purpose, without blackspots and with well-maintained road surfaces. We support efforts by the area forum working group to persuade the Scottish Government to adopt the A72 as a trunk road.

Town Streets: The road network in the town was developed piecemeal with the spread of housing and industry from the 19th century onwards. There are now locations where congestion is a problem. All movement through the burgh, whether by motor traffic, horse, bicycle, on foot or by mobility aids, should be safe and unobstructed. Speed limits should be respected and adhered to. We expect motor vehicles to give way to all other modes of traffic. Parking restrictions should be enforced.

New Bridges: Published studies of locations for a new bridge over the river Tweed have favoured a crossing to the east of the town centre. We expect an investigation of possible sites west of the town. Any new bridges should also, of course, include safe multi-use lanes for pedestrians, horse riders and cyclists.

Connectivity Review: The controversy over new bridges offers a timely opportunity for a full study of connectivity in the out-dated road network of Peebles with a view to making more of the streets, where appropriate, one-way; there are areas where streets are effectively one-way already because of parked cars and service vehicles. A review of the road network would help to bring it into the 21st century and it should be done before the construction of any new bridges.

Multi-use Paths: A review should recognise the popularity of cycling and walking amongst both residents and visitors and include a study of multi-use paths and connectivity. Aside from evident gaps in safe routes to school, the network of dedicated cycle tracks and footpaths does not cater fully for the needs of non-motor traffic. Cyclists, who visit the area in growing numbers and are important to the local economy, say it's difficult to get around town by bike and that there's nowhere to park, limited changing facilities, few seating areas and generally poor recognition of their needs. We expect that the "hump" near Hay Lodge that creates a barrier on safe walks to school and for those with mobility issues on the northern Tweedside walk can be solved without too much difficulty.

Community Transport: The community transport schemes operated by The Bridge and various charities are short of volunteer drivers. This resource helps elderly and disabled to get out and about and play an active part in the community and without it their quality of life is reduced. An integrated community transport scheme would help to solve this problem.

A Bus Station: Buses serving the Burgh and places beyond such as Melrose and Edinburgh currently stop outside the Post Office in Eastgate. At peak periods there may be as many as four or five buses lined up yet there is only space for two. This causes congestion and could also be a contributory factor to a road accident waiting to happen. Buses are often parked overnight in a dedicated space adjacent to the Edinburgh Road car park. With some modifications and expansion this is an ideal location for a bus station with facilities that would improve the experience of using public transport. There are public toilets already on site.

Pavements and Lights: Pavements in many parts of the network are sometimes too narrow or missing altogether, forcing those with mobility aids and parents with pushchairs into the roadway. Dropped kerbs are inappropriately placed or missing altogether. There are dark areas that make users feel insecure at night. Some of the lights on Tweed Bridge are not working. Problems with the power supply may be the problem. The town's lighting system in general needs attention.

Box X – Traffic congestion and bottlenecks

The base arrangement of roads in Peebles follows that developed in the days prior to motorised transport – with next to no changes since. This presents a range of problems – which have become more pronounced as the settlement has grown. For example:

- fifty years ago most people who lived in Peebles worked in Peebles; today the opposite is true – over sixty percent of workers resident in Peebles travel out of town to work.
- 31 per cent of Peebles households own two or more cars, and the majority of owners park their cars on the street side; an unintended consequence of this is that many key road routes in Peebles in practice operate as single track roads, and present access problems for wide vehicles (refuse collections, deliveries, and emergency services).

Many people now make reference to increased traffic congestion in Peebles as a problem. In the greater scheme of things these delays may be minor relative to delays experienced in more urban settings, but nevertheless they do represent a raised likelihood of accident (vehicle to vehicle, vehicle to pedestrian, and vehicle to cyclist), i.e. a bit more than simply an inconvenience.

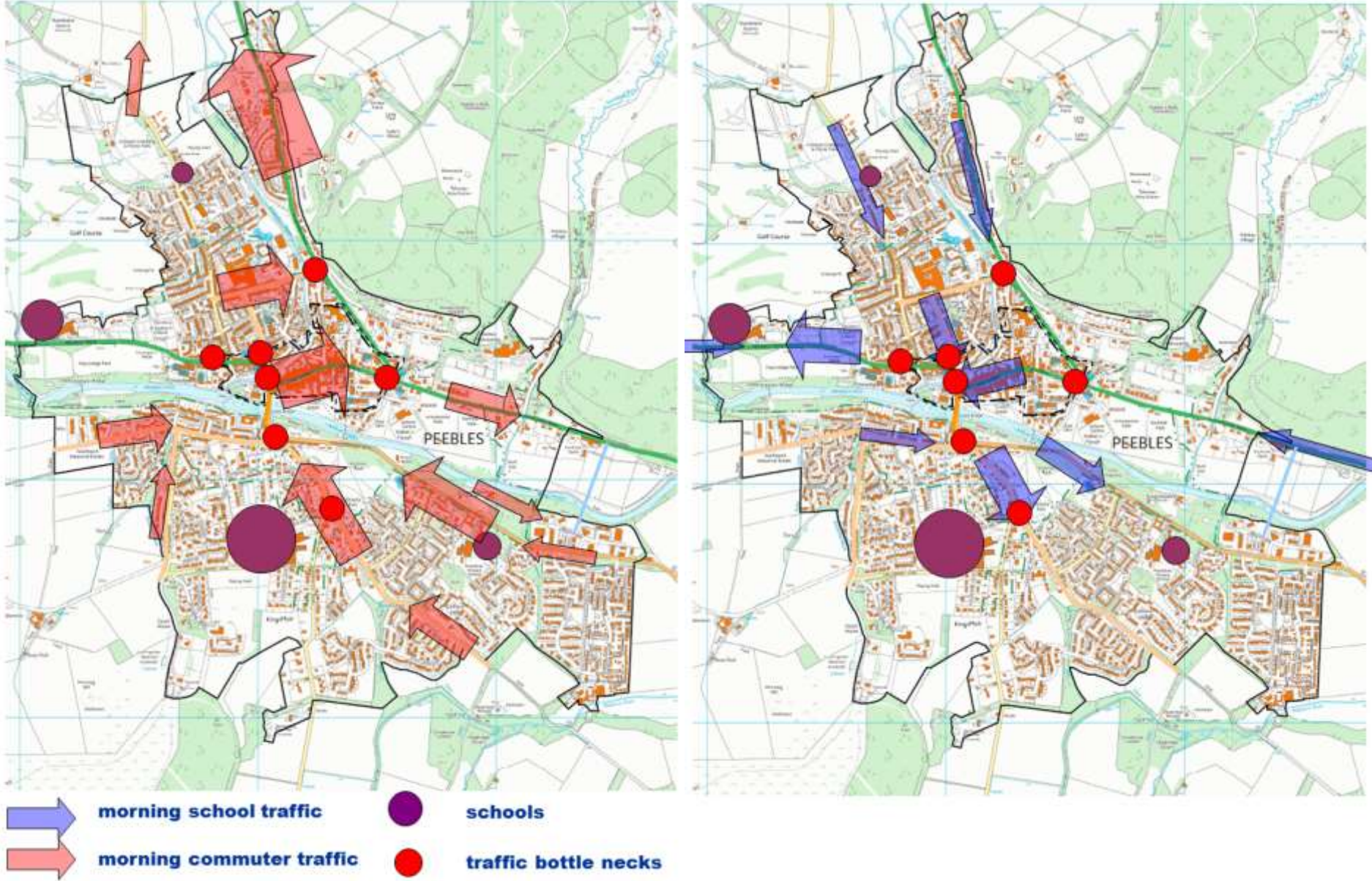
In addition, such congestion also impacts negatively on business in key parts of town – notably the High Street, Northgate and Old Town – making any shopping experience more stressful, less enjoyable, and casting the town in a less attractive light. And limitations in the paths network in Peebles, combined with new builds further and further from town services, means that use of motor transport to access town services is ranked above walking and cycling, in what is after all a very small settlement – and thus further contributes to congestion.

In a further complication, less than satisfactory town centre car parking provision can mean that drivers spend more time than should be necessary driving around looking for a space to park, further contributing to town traffic, and also raising the likelihood of accident as they manoeuvre to retrace their steps or to find parking places on side streets.

In the following graphic we illustrate the conditions pertaining in respect of the morning “rush hour” – a combination of people commuting to work, and these and others dropping their children off to school. This exemplifies some of the underlying features of the problem, and the location of key bottlenecks. There are ways of mitigating these issues, but they require radical action. Thus:

- Improvement in off-road pedestrian and cycle routes to school might encourage fewer parents to deliver and collect their children from school
- Improvement in the availability of public (or indeed private multi-person) transport to and from key commuter destinations in Edinburgh and the Pentland Science Park might reduce the number of driver only car journeys to and from work.
- Some further rationalisation of on-street parking, road patterns and road directions within Peebles might be expected to lead to improvements in traffic flow, and reduction in the impacts of key bottlenecks.

Fig X –illustration of morning traffic congestion and bottle-necks



Community Facilities

Principle – maintain and improve the recreational and social amenities of the town.

Context

The Chambers Institution: Peebles is lucky to have the iconic Grade A listed Chambers Institution, the former town house of the Duke of Queensbury, near the centre of the High Street. This historic range of buildings was given to the town by the publisher and Peebles native William Chambers in 1857 and is a centre for everyday activities and special occasions. Officially opened in 1859 and extended through a gift of £10,000 from the Scottish-American industrialist and philanthropist Andrew Carnegie in 1910, the Institution now accommodates a library, a museum, art gallery, tourist information centre, the John Buchan Museum, Citizens' Advice Bureau, a local authority front desk, Burgh Hall and council chamber.

The Chambers Room tells the story of the historic Burgh through objects and also accommodates a reference library, along with a copy of the historic Alexander Frieze - a 16 metre long reproduction of portions of the Elgin Marbles, and a complete facsimile of the *Triumph of Alexander* by the Danish sculptor Bertil Thorvaldsen, commissioned and donated by William Chambers. The quiet and spacious courtyard has attractive borders and a unique and much-loved War Memorial. Management of the Institution passed to the six elected local SBC members – four from Peebles and two from Clovenford - appointed by the SBC, with one independent trustee, following the resignation *en bloc* of the former trustees. A public consultation on the future of the Institution is currently being carried out by the Scottish Historic Buildings Trust (SHBT).

Sport for All: Facilities for soccer, rugby, cricket, bowls, tennis and golf in particular are well appointed and maintained. Football and cricket matches are played at Whitestone Park, rugby at the Gytes and Hay Lodge Park and the 18-hole golf club is located at the top of Kirkland Street. The golf club employs seven ground staff while the football pitches are maintained by SBC, which notes that there is a sizeable population of children and young people who would benefit from additional leisure facilities. The Peebles Rugby Football Club maintains its grounds. The bowls club at Walkershaugh is one of the oldest in Scotland. The children's playgrounds at Hay Lodge park and alongside the Kingsmeadows Road car park are popular and well maintained by SBC.

Among those in need of additional facilities are skateboarders, who make use of the Edinburgh Road car park in the absence of a dedicated skateboard park. They are generally well-behaved and courteous to car park users but some elderly people find them intimidating and are reluctant to go too near. We are pleased to know that proposals for a dedicated Skate Park continue to progress..

The 3G Pitch: SBC has named Peebles as its favoured location for a 3G artificial pitch but its choice of Victoria Park for the facility is controversial and fiercely opposed by a significant number of residents. One of the issue is the use of Common Good land for an essentially a SBC initiative against widespread local disquiet.

Green Spaces: Peebles benefits from admirable parklands and green spaces with delightful walks along both sides of the river Tweed in both directions. SBC has produced some useful and informative booklets available for a mere £1 in the TIC. To the east it's possible to walk for miles through mostly Common Good land north of the river past Neidpath Castle and the former railway viaduct and beyond. South of the river in the same direction a walk follows the former railway line past before swinging into the hills – the Sware Circuit and the longer route past the ancient hill forts on Cademuir. There are walks to Stobo and Lyne, the 13-mile John Buchan Way to Broughton and

many more. But these are poorly signed from the town – where they are signed at all. Signposting would help residents and visitors alike as well as having wider benefits in terms of health and well-being.

Town Team: Both the Peebles Town Action Plan and this document clearly underwrite the need for a Town Team to take matters forward, cross the boundaries between business and commerce, authorities and institutions and the third sector and attract funding to make the vision real. This body, operated by a full-time administrator from a permanent town centre site, would be a focus to enable all sections of the Burgh, the county and the country to engage with the Vision of Peebles as outlined here.

Emergency Services: The fire and ambulance services share a site in Caedonian Road south of the river while the police station lies to the north on Rosetta Road. Both these roads are effectively one-way because of parked vehicles, which also can hamper speed of exit by emergency vehicles. The police station is remote from the centre of town and is usually unstaffed.

Issues

1. The future of the Chambers Institution needs to be secured in line with the conclusions of the SHBT consultation, and restored to local control.
2. The false ceiling in the Burgh Hall should be investigated: whether to remove it and install improved insulation; or whether an additional floor could be added to increase available space.
3. Improved accessibility would open up all parts of the Institution.
4. Reserved parking would improve access to the Institution.
5. A Skatepark would benefit young people .
6. The location of the 3G pitch should be reconsidered, with particular paid to a site at or near the High School where changing facilities and car parking already exist.
7. Protect, preserve and maintain the green spaces and riverside walks.
8. Suitable signage for cycle tracks and footpaths would improve accessibility from the centre of Peebles to the surrounding countryside.
9. The wide expanse of Tweed Green is a wonderful resource for the town that comes into its own with the different festivals and events – from Tweedlove to the annual Wood Fair and the Big Free Festival run by the churches. It has a bandstand that is currently locked and used for storage instead of for its original purpose.
10. A Town Team would co-ordinate, manage and initiate efforts to conserve and protect what we have and make sustainability the foundation for the future.

Standards and thresholds

Requirements:

Peebles is noted for the range of its community facilities, but some of these are under threat from local authority spending cuts. We are aware that councils in other parts of the UK are cutting back

on public libraries and other facilities. We expect Peebles to continue to have public lending and reference libraries.

The Chambers Institution: This is a treasured amenity but access to some areas is difficult for people with mobility issues. We look forward to the results of the public consultation on the future of the Institution, which adds historic interest and dignity to the town centre. It is essential that it is protected, well-maintained and enhanced. And that it is managed by local people.

The 3G Pitch: Though potentially an exciting new asset for the town it has become a contentious issue. It is important that it located in the best possible place. We expect discussions on its location to be open and comprehensive and that all sides in the debate should have the opportunity to take part in the discussions.

Sport for All: There are good facilities for sports such as rugby, football, golf, bowls and tennis. Tennis, golf and bowls could become added attractions for visitors. But apart from those mentioned, there is a general lack of facilities for young people, particularly skateboard enthusiasts who currently practice their skills in Edinburgh car park, and for BMX riders. We expect improved communications with young people through the High School and youth focussd organisations to ensure that we are aware of their aspirations. We also expect discussions among responsible bodies and interested parties on ways to develop a skate park.

Green Spaces: The green spaces and riverside walks are important and much treasured amenities that lend character to the town as well as offering space for recreation, exercise and leisure. We expect these to be maintained and enhanced and expanded where possible should the opportunity to do so arise. We expect efforts to be made to improve the bandstand and bring it into use for its original purpose.

Action Plans

There are a wide range of actions that need to be undertaken if we are to turn the Vision for Peebles into a reality. Some of these can be acted on by voluntary groups able to access funds needed for professional assistance. Some will be the responsibility of the local authority, NHS Borders or other institutions. They also have relevance for the government itself.

They raise real concerns about local democracy and community empowerment. At a time when communities are being encouraged to do more for themselves, decision-making seems to be moving further away. The result is a feeling of disempowerment that is bad for democracy, bad for the institutions and bad for the community itself. Respect should be paid to those who care about their community – not just when a controversial issue suddenly arises that they believe affects their well-being, but from a sense of social responsibility in general. Sometimes these are not elected councillors or officials, who tow a party line or adhere to an authority's top-down strategy, but independent people with a track record of voluntary work and community involvement.

Here we list what we gauge to be the most urgent issues that need attention and resolution. They need to be resolved in the interests of the quality of life in Peebles.

1. **The Character of the Town:** The current planning system fails adequately to address the cumulative impacts of new housing on the character of the town and is compromising the features that make Peebles a unique and attractive place to live and work.
2. **Environment and Landscape Setting:** Expansion of the Burgh will not exceed the current settlement limits of the town nor extend beyond the 200 metre contour.
3. **Peebles Common Good Fund:** A strategic review of the governance of Peebles Common Good Fund with a view to greater involvement at a community level through the community council.
4. **Housing:** Houses should not receive planning permission or be constructed out of alignment with the capacity of essential infrastructures to accommodate such housing.
5. **Education:** The *"inadequate and unsatisfactory"* High School science laboratories and maths tower need urgent improvement alongside a development strategy for the school.
6. **Health and Social Care:** A review that focuses on improving, integrating and expanding the services provided at Hay Lodge Hospital and health centre.
7. **The Economy and Employment:** A strategy to safeguard the March Street site and to maximise the potential of the tourism industry.
8. **Tourism:** A tourism strategy for the Burgh
9. **Getting Around:** Roads, pavements, multi-use paths and any new bridges need to be fit for purpose and in the right place.
10. **Community Facilities:** The future of the Chambers Institution should be secured and restored to local control.

What will happen next

The Vision for Peebles reflects the community's aspirations. In order for it to become an effective guide and a tool to inform and guide future action a range of other organisations and institutions.

We need to measure changes in the quality of life and services and establish a framework to monitor the following matters.

- Chambers Institution
- High School
- Connectivity: multi-use paths within the town; car parking
- New settlements and Second Bridge
- Unsustainable housing developments
- Health & Social Care
- Local Employment
- A Tourism Strategy
- Breaking out of the High Street

Appendix

Historical Notes

The Character of the Town

"The town of Peebles", wrote Dorothy Wordsworth in 1803, "looks very pretty from the Neidpath road; it is an old town, built of grey stone." Robert Forsyth, writing in his 1805 series *The Beauties of Scotland* wrote, "Peebles is, upon the whole, well built; its principal street is spacious and well paved, and terminates on the west in a stately church of modern architecture." These observations hold true today.

Peebles attracted visitors – and migrants – from earliest times. The longevity of the settlement is seen in the name of the town, which is derived from the Brythonic (early Welsh) word *pebyll*, meaning a tented encampment. It was a temporary settlement that soon grew into something permanent, and has drawn visitors, including kings, ever since. The town was created a Royal Burgh by the 12th century King David I of Scotland and later King William I (The Lion) of Scotland (1165-1214) ruled that the country's two chief courts of justice were to be held annually either in Edinburgh or Peebles. Scottish kings were frequent visitors and the English Edward I was here twice, in 1301 and 1306 – albeit with less amicable intent. The town was frequently burnt and sacked by invaders from England. There are remnants of the 16-century town wall and one of its bastion towers.

St Andrews church was founded in 1120 and abandoned in 1560, 12 years after being destroyed by and English army during the "Rough Wooing".

Common Good

Commonly-held land and property has been a feature of life in the Burgh for centuries. Much of the present portfolio has been consolidated in comparatively recent times. It was once very extensive. The 1621 Charter of James VI listed extensive common land including Kingsmuir, Cademuir, Hamildean, Venlaw and Glentress, houses, mills, the sequestered ecclesiastical property. William Chambers, in his *History of Peeblesshire*, published in 1864, comments:"few Burghs in Scotland had its existence so carefully provided for; and further, ...a history of the alienation of so much wealth, were it possible to tell it minutely, would constitute one of the darkest chapters in the annals of civic maladministration."

Education

Schools were recognised as important in Peebles long ago. As early as 1464 the Burgh bailies are recorded as appointing a schoolmaster; and in 1555 they agreed to provide the master with an "honest chamber," and the use of the tolbooth to teach his bairns reading and writing English. "Latinists" are mentioned in 1559, and in 1563 the Burgh Council ordered the master to concentrate on his duties, and not to go to hunting or indulge in other pleasures without licence from the aldermen. Education was made compulsory in 1637 and in 1653 the Burgh issued an order requiring all parents to send their (male) children "capable of learning, traiding or craftes" to the town school, which was regularly visited and inspected by burghers. In 1688 the master was told to teach all

children, even those whose parents were unable to pay the fees. In 1693, three men, including a former Provost, were fined for sending their sons to an alternative school rather than the one managed by the Burgh and the Presbytery. That year the Burgh paid more than £146 Scots a year with lodging and coals for the schoolmaster and also paid a stipend and provided a house for a school doctor.

After the religious reformation and until the beginning of the 18th century an “English” and a “Latin” school were held in the former cloisters of the Cross Kirk monastery, where a house was also made for the schoolmasters. Two women also kept schools for girls. In 1656 they were banned from accepting any “*mail children, ather of toun or landwart children*”. (The ban was ineffective and in 1688 the burghers sent the magistrates to the schools run by women to evict any boys.) The earliest purpose-built schools we know about were at the foot of School Brae, facing onto Tweed Green. On the west, with the town’s crest of three salmons on its pediment, was the “English School”, built in 1766 and rebuilt at a cost of £541 in 1861. On the east was the grammar, or “Latin” school, built in 1812. The late 18th century Cabbage Hall nearby was formerly the teacher’s residence with rooms for boarding pupils. St Joseph’s School was founded in 1865 for Roman Catholic children and located first in the building next to the church of the same name in Rosetta Road.

These schools, which closed in 1900, produced some outstanding individuals including the writers and publishers William and Robert Chambers and the poet, philosopher, and historian Professor John Veitch.

The two Burgh schools passed into the control of the local School Board in 1873, when education became compulsory for five to 13-year-olds. By 1901, following three decades when the population increased from 2,631 to 5,266, five schools were needed to meet demands. The Burgh school, built halfway up School Brae in 1886, was extended, Kingsland School was built on the northern edge of the town at Rosetta Road and opened in 1900, and the late 19th-century infants school at Halyrude, then called Elcho Street school, was enlarged. St Josephs continued to take Roman Catholic children and the Bonnington Park Academy, founded in 1858 for around 120 pupils from as far away as Broughton, was taken over to serve as a High School, replacing the grammar school on the eastern corner of School Brae. This major reorganisation of education in Peebles was managed by the locally elected School Board, which borrowed £12,000 to build the first Kingsland School (repaid over 40 years).

Health and Social Care

Peebles had a hospital in medieval times. The Hospital of St Leonard and St Lawrence which was actually a hostel for pilgrims, was linked to an almshouse and hospital which was located towards the west end of the modern High Street and both had links with the Cross Kirk Trinitarian monastery in Peebles. The hospital stood in the field opposite the entrance to Glentress and is mentioned in burgh records in 1473. But nothing remains of either building, save for a few bumps and undulations in the field next to Horsburgh Castle at Eshiels tellingly called Chapelyards. The stream which runs down from Glentress was formerly once known as “*Spital Burn*”. The hospital is believed to have been founded in the late 1200s and run by monks from Melrose Abbey.

A 20-bed Peebles County Hospital was built as the county's infectious diseases hospital in Rosetta Road and was opened 1897. With mass immunisation against diphtheria and a loss of virulence in scarlet fever, there was a reduced need for such a hospital and in 1946 it was converted for the care of the long-term sick, with most of the patients being elderly. The hospital, which was made of wood and corrugated iron, closed around 1984 and was demolished, with the site developed as retirement / sheltered housing.

Hay Lodge Hospital in Neidpath Road was officially opened in 1983, replacing an earlier hospital developed by the Red Cross during World War One in a pair of houses on Tweed Green. With the addition of a third adjoining house it was officially opened in 1922 as the War Memorial Hospital. Unfortunately, occasional flooding meant that the site was unsuitable. It was closed in 1985 and is now the Peebles Nursing Home.

The Economy and Employment

Peebles was once a mill town. The industry developed from a home-based woollen trade that made the town echo to the click-clack of the loom. A spinning mill was established at Tweedside (now the site of the swimming pool) in 1860 and with industrialisation power looms were established at Damdale and March Street. As the second half of the 20th century began, the mills were working at full capacity, a significant part of an industry that employed 12,720 people in the Borders in 1961. Workers commuted into Peebles by train and special coaches, and Damdale Mill established a hostel for some 24 women from Kirkcaldy and Castle Douglas.

In 1965 disaster struck when the Tweedside Mill was gutted by fire and Damdale Mill closed down in 1967. The closures spelt the end of the industry's position as the main source of employment in Peebles

Tourism

"Taking the waters" became fashionable for the better off in the 18th century and Peebles became popular as a destination for health tourism. The trade increased as the railways made travel easier and the Hydro Hotel, which opened to the public in 1881, was one of a number of spas and hydropathic establishments set up in Scotland. These offered water based treatments that, it was claimed, could alleviate pains and cure a number physical ailments. Early hydropathic centres were small and focused on treatments, but as one of the later wave of larger establishments, Peebles offered a range of sporting and recreational pursuits in addition to therapy. When not taking the water, guests could take the air in the Hydro's extensive grounds, which included an extensive kitchen garden that supplied guests with fruit and vegetables.

The original hotel building burnt down in 1905, and its replacement was erected on the same site in 1907 and is still in operation.