

CHAPTER 6 INFRASTRUCTURE

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Transport

Introduction

- 6.1 Transport is essential both to ensure that people can access jobs, shops, and social and leisure facilities, and to enable the movement of raw materials and finished goods. The importance of good road and rail links for the competitiveness of the economy of the Scottish Borders is highlighted in the Economic Strategy *New Ways*.
- 6.2 The context for the Structure Plan policies is provided by National Planning Policy Guidelines, principally NPPG 17 *Transport and Planning*. Government transport policy is continuing to change with an increasing emphasis on reducing reliance on the private car in favour of public transport, cycling and walking.
- 6.3 The Council has recently published a Local Transport Strategy (LTS) which promotes the concept of 'integrated' transport in accordance with Government policy. The concept of an integrated transport policy encompasses not only integration within and between different modes of transport, but also integration with environmental, social, economic, educational and health policies and objectives. This Plan has been prepared in parallel with the LTS which has enabled an integrated approach to be adopted to land use and transport planning.



Transportation & Development

- 6.4 The Structure Plan has an important role to play in helping, over time, to reduce the extent to which people have to travel by car for work, shopping and leisure. It can also help enable a choice of modes of transport to reduce the unnecessary use of the car. These aims are supported by the Development Strategy which promotes a settlement pattern that is considered most likely to result in complementary land uses locating near one another; for example, houses close to sources of employment. It is also a settlement pattern which supports the Borders railway and facilitates the improvement of bus routes.
- 6.5 The low population density, dispersed settlement pattern and varied topography of the Scottish Borders do however create particular difficulties and challenges in providing high quality transport infrastructure. Recognising that public transport is unlikely ever to be able to meet all the transport requirements of rural communities, the Council acknowledges the continued importance of the car to the Scottish Borders. Nevertheless, public transport, walking and cycling have the potential to be used for an increasing proportion of journeys. The Council is also interested in the opportunities offered by air transport. The issue

of accessibility to community services and safer routes to school is dealt with further in Chapter 5, Community Services.

POLICY I1 Transportation and Development

New developments will be guided to locations in accordance with the Development Strategy and associated with the strategic public transport network that are, or could be, well served by a variety of means of transport. Developers will be expected to demonstrate how their proposals accord with this principle.

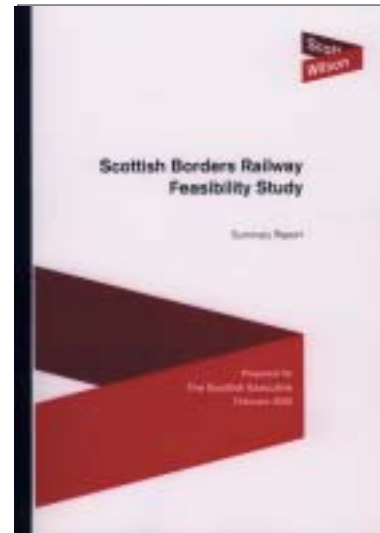
Public Transport

- 6.6 Scottish Borders, Midlothian and City of Edinburgh Councils are jointly promoting a Parliamentary Order to procure the construction and operation of the former Waverley Railway Line from the City of Edinburgh to the Scottish Borders. The restoration of the Borders railway is a key element of the Development Strategy. The strategy provides initially for a link between Edinburgh and the Central Borders in line with the findings of the Railway Feasibility Study which considered the re-opening of the Waverley line from Edinburgh to Carlisle. The re-opening of the Borders railway would be likely to improve the climate for investment and the prospects for economic growth (see paragraph 3.5). In offering opportunities for faster commuter journeys from the Central Borders to Edinburgh, it would also help enable development pressure to be guided to the Primary Hub. Conversely, failure to secure the rail link between the Scottish Borders and Edinburgh will limit the opportunity to refocus the location of commuter housing pressure and, ultimately, the ability to achieve a more sustainable pattern of development in south-east Scotland as a whole.

POLICY I2 Rail Services

The Council supports the principle of re-establishing rail links between the Scottish Borders and the national rail network, and will work towards:

- (i) the development of passenger and freight services between Edinburgh and the Central Borders, and*
- (ii) the development of a similar connection from Carlisle in the south, initially for the movement of timber from the south Roxburgh forest area using the Kielder Branch, with a view to the long-term restoration of a through route.*



The Railway Feasibility Study (published February 2000) was commissioned by the then Scottish Office and managed by a Partnership including the Councils of Scottish Borders, Midlothian and Edinburgh City.

“The re-opening of the Borders railway ... would ... improve the climate for investment and ... help enable development pressure to be guided to the Primary Hub”

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“The strategy provides initially for a link between Edinburgh and the Central Borders . . .”

(Photo: courtesy of Rail Action Group, East of Scotland)

- 6.7 In the light of the realistic possibility of restoring rail services to the Central Borders in the near future, a strong policy stance is required to ensure the alignment is protected from further development and that this protection also extends to potential station sites along the route.
- 6.8 It is recognised that, with the exception of the former Waverley Line and the Kielder Branch, the rest of the former network is unlikely to be used again in the foreseeable future as a route for a public transport system. This represents a network of over 125 miles of former track-bed which links many of the larger towns. Such routes offer considerable potential for alternative uses, notably walking and cycling.

POLICY I3

Protection of Former Railway Routes

Wherever practicable and appropriate, the Council will seek to safeguard the routes of former railway lines for future transport or recreational use. Disused routes with a reasonable prospect of re-use as a railway will be given a high level of protection, along with potential station sites. Where re-use for public transport is unlikely, the Council will seek to safeguard the routes of former railway lines where they are, or have the potential to be, used for walking, cycling and recreational use.

- 6.9 The Council continues to support the re-opening of a station at Reston in Berwickshire (on the East Coast Main Line) when technical timetabling constraints allow and demand is sufficient to justify a service.

Recommendation II

Reston Station

It is recommended that the Scottish Executive give consideration to the inclusion of improved local rail services in the Eastern Borders, incorporating a station at Reston, within the next Scotrail franchise.

- 6.10 Buses will continue to be the primary mode of public transport in the Scottish Borders and strategic links within and between the development hubs are of particular importance in ensuring access to community services and facilities. Routes providing access to the Borders General Hospital are of particular importance. The



Local bus service at St Boswells

strategic public transport network is shown on Diagram 15. Bus services are especially vital to groups who are statistically less likely to have access to a car; notably older people, women and those on low incomes. The trend towards an ageing population in the Scottish Borders will place even greater importance upon public transport provision in the future.

“Buses will continue to be the primary mode of public transport in the Scottish Borders ...”

- 6.11 Increasing the use of bus services can be encouraged by improving the convenience and safety of bus stations and by developing opportunities for multi-modal transport interchanges (for example, connecting bus routes with cycle routes or with the Borders rail link). Local Plans will highlight priorities for bus station improvements and the development of interchange facilities including multi-modal facilities where appropriate.

POLICY I4 Public Transport Provision

Development will be guided to areas which will support the strategic public transport network and are, or could be, well served by it. The Council will continue to support the maintenance of a strategic network of public transport provision and, where possible, secondary services through a range of providers.

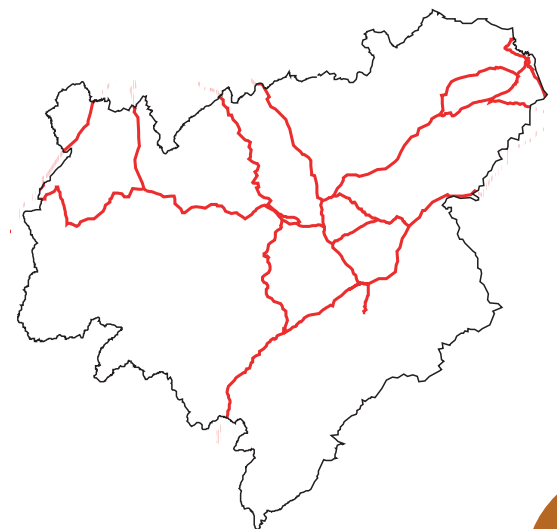
Cycling and Walking

- 6.12 Cycling and walking are the most sustainable modes of transport available in terms of their low environmental impacts. They offer considerable potential for future expansion, particularly within settlements and between adjacent settlements for short journeys by bicycle. Routes need to be safe, convenient and, in the case of cycling, well provided for in terms of parking infrastructure at the destination. In 1999, the Council adopted a Local Cycle Strategy which aims to encourage cycling and develop high quality cycle infrastructure. The Council will also use the forthcoming review of Local Plans to facilitate the implementation of the Local Cycle Strategy.

POLICY I5 Cycling

The Council will aim to ensure that developments give rise to no net loss of cycle access and contribute to the encouragement of cycling as a mode of transport.

Diagram 15
Strategic Public Transport Network



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Diagram 16
National Cycle Network



6.13 The National Cycle Network was officially opened in June 2000 and the 14,500 km route is expected to be complete by 2005. The network will make use of traffic-free and traffic-calmed sections as well as quiet minor roads. The section through the Scottish Borders (see Diagram 16) forms part of a Phase 2 route from Edinburgh to Berwick-upon-Tweed. The 200km route runs from Broad Law on the northern border with Midlothian to Ladykirk on the southern border with Berwick-upon-Tweed and passes through a number of towns on the way.

POLICY 16 National Cycle Network

The Council will support and assist in the development of the National Cycle Network through the Scottish Borders and will seek to integrate local cycle facilities and infrastructure into this network so as to maximise the benefit to local residents and tourists.

6.14 Increasing the number of pedestrian journeys can be encouraged by improvements to footpaths that enable easier and safer access within towns and links between towns and other destinations. The Scottish Borders also has much to offer in the way of recreational walking and this is more fully covered in Chapter 5, Community Services.

POLICY 17 Walking

The Council will support initiatives that facilitate journeys to be made on foot. Developers will be expected to demonstrate that they have given full consideration to pedestrian accessibility and to the incorporation of appropriate facilities into their development proposals.

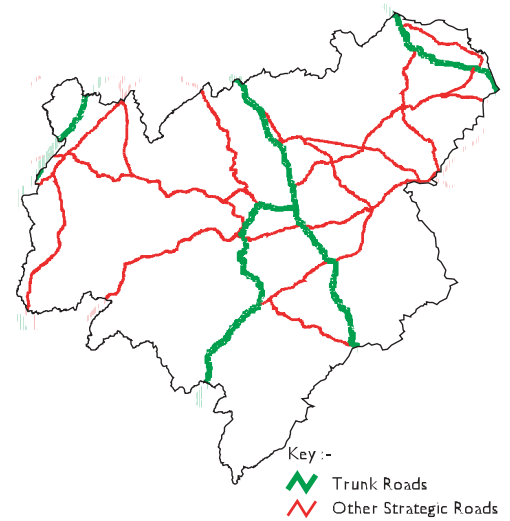
Roads

6.15 The Council acknowledges that the maintenance and improvement of the road network will continue to be essential for the economic growth of the Scottish Borders. The following policies recognise that a significant level of investment will be required in road infrastructure to ensure that the Scottish Borders economy is not disadvantaged in relation to its competitors.

“... the maintenance and improvement of the road network will continue to be essential ...”

- 6.16 There are currently five trunk roads which pass through the Scottish Borders and total some 185 kilometres in length (see Diagram 17). Since the previous Structure Plan was approved, the construction of the Melrose Bypass (A6091) led to the detrunking of the A7 north of Galashiels in 1995. It was further announced in April 1999 that both the A7 and the A68 were being detrunked south of the border in England.
- 6.17 The Strategic Roads Review published by the Scottish Executive in November 1999 announced that the Dalkeith Bypass scheme in Midlothian for the A68 was to be held in abeyance and considered alongside other emerging priorities. Given the importance of the A68 as the only trunk road north from the Central Borders, and the delays caused by congestion in Dalkeith, the Council continues to see this as a very important scheme which should be given a high priority by the Scottish Executive.
- 6.18 Proposals for a Selkirk bypass have been under consideration for many years and continue to be supported by the Council. The scheme is seen as important in enhancing local environmental quality in Selkirk and reducing journey times by both public transport and private car within the Primary Hub, particularly between Hawick and Galashiels. The Council also supports the dualling of the A1 on grounds of economic benefits and road safety.

Diagram 17
Trunk and Strategic Road Network



POLICY I8 Trunk Roads

The Council will continue to press the Government for the continued improvement of north/south trunk roads passing through the Scottish Borders, and in particular:

- (i) improvements to the A68 (including the Dalkeith Bypass in Midlothian),*
- (ii) improvements to the A7 south of Galashiels including a bypass for Selkirk, and the continuation of route action programmes, and*
- (iii) the dualling of the A1.*

- 6.19 In addition to trunk roads, there are a number of other strategic roads which provide important connections within the Scottish Borders (see Diagram 17). To a large extent these are east-west routes linking the Primary to the Eastern and Western Hubs identified in the Development Strategy, but also include roads which enhance the internal links within the hubs. The maintenance and improvement of these roads will continue to be a high priority for the Council. Route Action Plans will continue to be used to address issues such as road signing, accident black-spots, overtaking and the need for road improvements.



Hunter Bridge, Kelso. Completion of the outer distributor road and new bridge in 1998 alleviated traffic congestion in the town centre and improved journey times.

POLICY I9 Other Strategic Roads

The Council will review the strategic road network and continue with its route action plans and planned improvements to the non-trunk strategic road network, and in particular:

- (i) A72 Peebles - Galashiels,*
- (ii) A697 Coldstream - Carfraemill,*
- (iii) A698 Hawick - Coldstream,*
- (iv) A699 Selkirk - Kelso, and*
- (v) A6105 Earlston - Duns - Berwick-upon-Tweed.*



Transport of timber on minor roads.

6.20 As a result of the preferred areas for growth identified in the Development Strategy, there may be a requirement for road improvements in order to accommodate the additional demands on the network. Assessments will be carried out in parallel with the preparation of Local Plans to determine how the additional demand can most efficiently be met. To assist this work, a traffic model may be required covering the Central Borders, which is able to predict traffic levels on the basis of various scenarios.

6.21 The projected increase in timber production from Scottish Borders forests over the Structure Plan period is considerable. Owing to the location of many of the forests, the transportation of much of this output will, in its initial stages, be predominantly on minor roads, many of which are 'C' class or unclassified. Such roads rarely have either the width or structural integrity to accommodate the volume and size of vehicles employed to transport timber and the resultant impact and damage to roads and bridges can be considerable.

POLICY I10 Forestry Roads

The Council will continue to liaise closely with the Forestry Commission and the forestry industry to minimise the adverse impacts of timber extraction on the local road network. The Council will also continue to press the Government to address the issue of road damage related to timber extraction as a national issue.

Parking

6.22 Parking policy is acknowledged by Government guidance as an important tool to manage car use. Car parking is a significant land use in towns and the effective management of public parking

spaces is therefore important in making best use of the scarce land resource. The availability of convenient car parking facilities does, however, have an important role to play in enhancing the attractiveness of town centres. In residential areas, the availability of off-street parking may serve to enhance the visual quality of the environment and improve the opportunities for safe crossing. Yet at the same time, parked cars may help to reduce the speed of passing cars. For these reasons parking provision in all new development requires careful consideration.

- 6.23 The Council will consider the issue of public parking on a settlement by settlement basis to ensure that, as far as possible, solutions are put in place to tackle specific local problems. The Council is considering the development of maximum, rather than minimum, parking standards in accordance with Government guidance. Standards for cycle parking are also under consideration.



Parking at the Knowes, Kelso

POLICY III **Parking Provision in New Development**

In determining applications for development, regard will be had to the following:

- (i) the Council's current approved parking standards,*
- (ii) safety considerations,*
- (iii) environmental considerations including the scope to reduce car use.*

Water and Sewerage

- 6.24 Scottish Water (SW) is responsible for the provision of water and sewerage services within the Scottish Borders. The Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA), as the regulatory authority with regard to discharges to land, air and water, has a duty to control sewage discharges into 'controlled waters' - groundwater, watercourses, inland waters, estuary and coastal waters. Key issues for the Structure Plan are related to the future demand for services, water quality and environmental considerations, the control of surface water and the risk of flooding.

Service Provision

- 6.25 It is important for the successful implementation of the Development Strategy that the potential for development, in areas where growth is particularly supported, should not be constrained by the lack of availability of services. SW is engaged upon a programme of works to improve service provision. Many of these works are as a direct result of EC Directives - on water quality

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*Alemoor Reservoir
(Photo: courtesy of Scottish Water)*

and waste water in particular - and others are needed to ensure security of water supply. SW's commitment to these essential works has the implication of limiting the potential for investment to meet the requirements of new development. As a result, it is important that wherever possible, and provided that it is in accordance with the development strategy, any new development should be directed to locations that maximise the use of existing service provision.

- 6.26 The full realisation of the development strategy may increase the demand for service provision in some locations beyond existing capacities. This may require additional investment beyond that contained in current capital programmes. The Council will actively liaise with SW, through work on Local Plans and discussion on future investment plans, to ensure that water and sewerage services are adequate to support the development strategy in settlements that require additional investment.

POLICY 112 Provision of Water and Sewerage Services

The Council, in discussion with Scottish Water and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency, will seek to ensure:

- (i) that development in accordance with the Development Strategy is not constrained,*
- (ii) that spare water and sewerage infrastructure capacity is fully utilised,*
- (iii) that the identification and selection of sites in Local Plans is in accordance with the Development Strategy and with East of Scotland Water programmes, and*
- (iv) that development is in accordance with SW and SEPA best management practice.*

Water Quality

- 6.27 The high incidence of springs and boreholes makes the issue of groundwater resources and their protection one of particular concern in the Scottish Borders. The potential threat from over-abstraction or pollution is covered in the Groundwater Protection Strategy for Scotland adopted by SEPA in 1997.

- 6.28 The strategy highlights the need for vigilance in dealing with any development that might affect groundwater resources and also points out the close interrelationship between ground and surface water and the need for total protection of the water environment. The need for close working relations between the water authority - SW, the environmental regulator - SEPA, and the planning authority is an essential part of this process.

POLICY II3 Water Quality

The Council, in association with Scottish Water and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency, will seek to ensure that water quality is protected from the adverse effects of development. In particular:

- (i) development involving the leaching of pollutants into groundwater sources will not be permitted,*
- (ii) development will be assessed against the Groundwater Protection Strategy for Scotland, and,*
- (iii) any development with potentially adverse impacts on the water environment will be subject to consultation with the Scottish Environment Protection Agency and/or Scottish Water.*

Surface Water

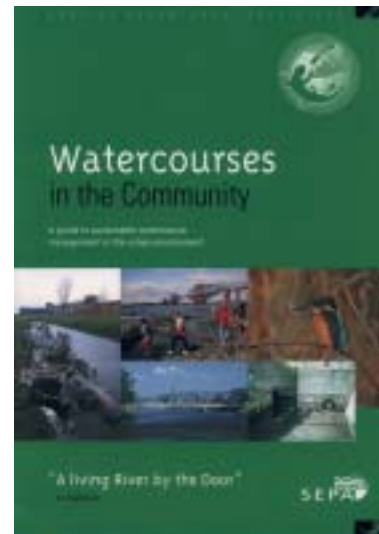
6.29 The water environment is affected by the quality of water discharging from surface water outfalls. It is important that these are not subject to pollutants or to extreme rates of discharge that could result in increased flood risk. In March 2000, the construction industry, in conjunction with SEPA, the Scottish Executive, Water Authorities, COSLA and other organisations, published a 'Design Manual for Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems - Scotland and Northern Ireland'. This provides guidance on the design and implementation of sustainable surface water drainage systems and highlights the value of best practice with regard to surface water treatment in preventing pollution, alleviating flood risk and protecting environmental quality.

POLICY II4 Surface Water

The Council will seek to control pollution associated with surface water discharge as part of any development proposal. Developers will, where appropriate, be encouraged to incorporate Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems as part of their proposals.

Flooding

6.30 Flooding and coastal erosion are natural phenomena which play an important role in shaping the natural environment and cannot entirely be prevented. The effects of more unpredictable weather in recent years - which has been attributed to climate change - appear to be increasing the likelihood of more frequent floods.



Guidance on sustainable watercourse management published in 2000 by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency.

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Nonetheless measures can be taken to reduce the risk of flooding and to mitigate the damage that is often caused. In particular, development of an area which is exposed to frequent or extensive flooding is likely to be unsustainable and should be avoided.

- 6.31 In accordance with the Flood Prevention (Scotland) Act 1961 as amended by the Flood Prevention and Land Drainage (Scotland) Act 1997 the Council has undertaken assessments of watercourses in areas with historical flood problems. Settlements that have been identified as being at risk to a greater or lesser degree include Broughton, Coldstream, Darnick, Earlston, Eddleston, Ednam, Eyemouth, Galashiels, Greenlaw, Hawick, Hermitage, Innerleithen, Jedburgh, Kelso, Lanton, Melrose, Newcastleton, Peebles, Selkirk, Stow and Walkerburn.



POLICY 115 Flood Risk Areas

The Council will seek to minimise the risk of damage through flooding by:

- (i) identifying areas of particular risk from flooding in Local Plans, in association with SEPA and through the Flood Appraisal Group,*
- (ii) safeguarding flood plains and other low lying land adjacent to rivers from further development, and*
- (iii) maintaining a presumption against development which would create an unmanageable risk of flooding or which would create or intensify an unmanageable flood risk elsewhere.*

- 6.32 The establishment of a Flood Appraisal Group, as recommended by National Planning Policy Guideline 7 *Planning and Flooding*, will seek to augment existing knowledge and identify particular locations where attention to flood risk will be required in Local Plans.

POLICY 116 Flood Appraisal Group

The Council will establish a Flood Appraisal Group to assess the strategic significance of flooding, to provide a forum for interested parties and to provide practical information and guidance.

Waste Management

- 6.33 The Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) published the National Waste Strategy: Scotland in December 1999, highlighting

the need for a radical change in the way Scotland manages its waste. It provides a framework by which Scotland can start to move towards a more sustainable approach to waste management. The new approach is based on a number of key principles:

- ◆ **Proximity and self-sufficiency** - as far as possible, waste should be dealt with as close to its point of origin as is environmentally acceptable
- ◆ **Precautionary principle** - ensure that action is taken now to reduce the potential for damage to the environment or human health in the future
- ◆ **Polluter pays** - the producer of waste should pay for a greater proportion of the total costs of disposal, and
- ◆ **Waste hierarchy** - waste should be tackled as high up the waste hierarchy as possible. Focus should be placed on waste reduction, reuse and recycling with landfill seen as a last resort for the residual waste (see diagram).

The context for the Structure Plan policies is set by National Planning Policy Guideline (NPPG) 10 *Planning and Waste Management*. The role of the Structure Plan in waste management is primarily in ensuring adequate provision for landfill, although it can play a role further up the waste hierarchy, for example by encouraging the use of recycled building materials (Policies E7 and N20).

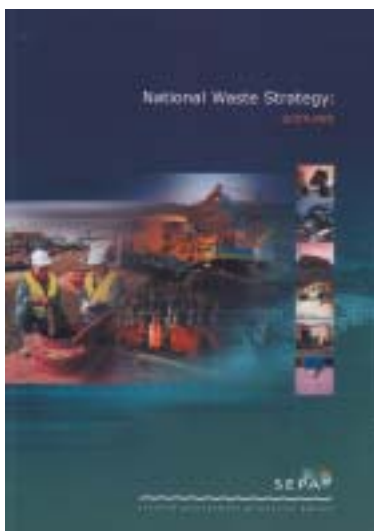
6.34 The National Waste Strategy established a number of Waste Strategy Areas (WSAs) across Scotland to take forward the implications of the National Strategy at a regional level, each WSA being required to produce an Area Waste Plan. The Scottish Borders is part of a WSA which includes the City of Edinburgh, West Lothian, Midlothian and East Lothian. At the same time the Council is preparing a Waste Management Strategy which will complement the Area Waste Plan.

6.35 The issues in the Scottish Borders are influenced by the existing and anticipated future demographic profile of the area, transport infrastructure and environmental considerations. Existing landfill capacity, which is severely limited in the Scottish Borders, is clearly a further key consideration. Preston Cleugh near Duns and the Dunion near Jedburgh have lifespans of approximately two years, while Easter Langlee at Galashiels has a lifespan of 4-16 years depending on whether the site is lined. The Structure Plan strategy for growth which aims to increase the population of the Scottish Borders will also have implications for the Scottish Borders Waste Management Strategy and Area Waste Plan. A number of options for future waste management are currently being evaluated by the Council and any resultant land use implications will be addressed through the review of Local Plans and, if necessary, as an Alteration to the Structure Plan.

WASTE HIERARCHY (National Waste Strategy: Scotland - SEPA)



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The National Waste Strategy for Scotland published in 2000 by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency.

POLICY II7 Waste Management

Local Plans will make provision for waste management facilities. In identifying sites and assessing applications for new waste management facilities, the Council will have regard to the following:

- (i) the provisions of the 'National Waste Strategy: Scotland',*
- (ii) the provisions of the Area Waste Plan and the Scottish Borders Waste Management Strategy,*
- (iii) the objectives of sustainable waste management and the need to move waste up the waste hierarchy,*
- (iv) the need to safeguard both the natural and built environment, and,*
- (v) the need to safeguard the amenity and environmental quality of existing and future developments from significant adverse impact from waste management facilities.*

Contaminated Land

6.36 From July 2000, Scottish local authorities have new duties and powers under Part IIA of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 in relation to the identification and remediation of land that is not suitable for its current use owing to the presence of contamination. The Scottish Executive identifies the planning system as fulfilling a vital role in ensuring that land is suitable for new uses as planning consents are granted.

6.37 The definition of contaminated land under the legislation is complex and will mean, in practice, that some sites will not be 'contaminated' within the provisions of the Act yet will still require remediation before they can be developed. In accordance with the strategy to support development of vacant, derelict and brownfield sites, Local Plans can create opportunities for site redevelopment where contamination is a problem and where remediation would not otherwise take place.

POLICY II8 Contaminated Land

The Council will encourage and seek to facilitate the redevelopment of contaminated sites in accordance with Part IIA of the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

Energy

- 6.38 The context for Structure Plan policies on energy is provided mainly by National Planning Policy Guideline (NPPG) 6 *Renewable Energy*. The guidance promotes a shift away from traditional energy sources, particularly the burning of fossil fuels, and towards renewable sources. This reflects global concerns about resource depletion and environmental impacts.
- 6.39 Renewable energy is the term used to cover those sources of energy which are naturally occurring within the environment and which can either be tapped without consuming the resource, or where the resource can renew itself on a human timescale. Renewables have a number of advantages over conventional sources of energy, among which are the reduced (or no net) emission of greenhouse gases and a theoretically inexhaustible supply. Examples of renewable sources of energy are wind, solar, hydro, wave, tidal, energy crops, and forest waste. NPPG 6 also treats the incineration of waste as a form of renewable energy.
- 6.40 The Scottish Borders has considerable potential for the development of renewable energy. The resources identified in particular as having realistic commercial prospects at the present time and in the near future are wind, energy crops and forest waste. Current technical and market developments are likely to further increase the economic incentives to develop the renewable energy potential of the Scottish Borders.
- 6.41 The first operational wind farm came on-stream at Dun Law (17 MW), north of Lauder during 2000 and a further site at Bowbeat (30 MW), north of Peebles, has planning consent. These two developments will have the installed capacity to provide the domestic electricity requirements of over 70% of the households in the Scottish Borders. It is anticipated that the Scottish Borders will, even in the short term, become a net exporter of energy from renewable sources.

POLICY II9 Renewable Energy

The Council supports the development of renewable energy sources that can be developed in an environmentally acceptable manner.

- 6.42 Since wind energy has potentially the greatest visual impact of all renewable sources, the former Borders Regional Council produced a 'Planning Framework for Wind Energy Developments' in 1995. While this continues to be a useful document for assessing the appropriateness of wind energy developments, it is



*Wind Farm at Soutra Hill on the A68 trunk road.
(Photo: courtesy of Renewable Energy Systems Ltd).*

“Current technical and market developments are likely to further increase the economic incentives to develop the renewable energy potential of the Scottish Borders”.

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recognised that technical and economic constraints have changed in the past five years. As a result, the 'Areas of Search' methodology used in the 'Framework' document has been modified, as set out below.

Diagram 18
Wind Energy Development
- Areas of Search
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6.43 Table 6.1 below shows the environmental designations that have been used to define the various areas of search for wind energy developments. Diagram 18 shows the distribution of these areas of search in the Scottish Borders. The two issues of a strategic nature not covered by this methodology - cumulative impact and landscape character - have to be considered on a site by site basis. The diagram is designed to give a broad visual indication of strategic policy constraints.

Table 6.1 Areas of Search for Wind Energy Developments

Sensitive	Potentially Sensitive	Preferred
SAC SPA RAMSAR NSA	AGLV SSSI NNR	Areas outside any environmental designation

6.44 Cumulative impact, or the further development of existing sites, were not considered to be significant issues at the time that the planning framework was produced. This is now no longer the case. The cumulative impact of potential developments with those already developed or with planning permission may restrict development potential in otherwise acceptable areas.

POLICY I20 Wind Energy Developments

Proposals for wind energy developments will be assessed against the following criteria:

- (i) impact on the landscape character of the areas, and neighbouring Structure Plan areas, as guided by Landscape Character Assessments,*
- (ii) the Structure Plan's environmental policies,*
- (iii) the impact of noise on residential and other noise-sensitive developments,*
- (iv) interference with aircraft activity,*
- (v) a significantly increased risk of 'shadow flicker' or 'driver distraction', or,*
- (vi) any unacceptable cumulative impacts.*

6.45 Whilst much attention, particularly at the national level, is focused on large-scale commercial renewable energy projects such as wind farms, the Council is also keen to encourage the use of renewable energy technologies at the local level. Biomass (principally energy crops and forest residues), hydro power, combined heat and power (CHP), photovoltaics and passive solar design (PSD) also have the potential to be deployed in the Scottish Borders.

POLICY I21

Small Scale Renewable Energy Technologies

Proposals for community and small-scale renewable energy generation (or related techniques) will be encouraged where they have no significant adverse impact on the natural and built environment or amenity of an area.

All developers, whatever the nature of their proposals, will be encouraged to consider the potential to use materials, designs and technologies which either reduce energy consumption or reduce the environmental impact of energy generation when formulating their proposals.



Willow Coppice at Tweed Horizons, Newtown St Boswells. An example of smaller scale renewable energy technology.

6.46 The Scottish Environment Protection Agency has published a guide to Best Practicable Environmental Option (BPEO) appraisal as part of the National Waste Strategy. This provides guidance to local authorities in preparing Area Waste Plans (see paragraph 6.34) and considers the issue of energy from waste as one of the options of dealing with waste. Energy from waste, whilst being treated as a form of renewable energy by the Government, nevertheless raises different environmental and locational issues. The Council will therefore deal with any energy from waste proposal as a waste management development rather than a renewable energy development.

POLICY I22

Energy from Waste

Development proposals for energy from waste installations will only be permitted where they are in accord with the Area Waste Plan; represent the Best Practicable Environmental Option (BPEO) for the waste streams to be used; and comply with all other relevant Structure Plan policies.

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Telecommunications

“... in the Scottish Borders, Information and Communications Technology (ICT) has a vital role to play ...”

6.47 In rural areas such as the Scottish Borders, information and communications technology (ICT) has a vital role to play in reducing the effects of geographical remoteness or peripherality. This is true for the ability of the Scottish Borders to challenge successfully for the attraction and development of new enterprises; for the ability of existing businesses to compete on an equal footing with their competitors; and for lifelong learning and social inclusion in terms of learning, training and community development.

6.48 Whilst the broadband link from Edinburgh to the Central Borders and other high capacity links passing through the area can provide significant benefit to those organisations capable of linking into them, there are limitations to the potential benefits. Businesses and organisations have to be physically close (under 500m) - to these links in order to take direct advantage. Those remote from these links - between 0.5-10Km - have to connect to them via an intermediate BT link.

6.49 Detailed policies covering the siting of domestic and commercial telecommunications equipment will be set out in Local Plans. These will reflect policy set out in National Planning Policy Guideline 19: Radio Telecommunications. Whilst the role of the planning system is concerned with the location and design of facilities, the Council will continue to press British Telecom for the improvement of ICT, particularly measures to improve business access to high capacity links.

POLICY I23

Telecommunications Infrastructure

The Council will support and encourage the development of cost effective high speed telecommunications facilities and services that support and assist the development of the local economy or support local communities particularly in the Development Hubs.