

A scenic landscape featuring a wide river flowing through a lush green valley. The left bank is densely wooded with tall trees, while the right bank is a grassy field. In the distance, rolling hills are visible under a blue sky with scattered white clouds.

# **Tweedbank - Vision for Growth and Sustainability**

## **A Community for the Future**

### **Supplementary Planning Guidance and Design Guide**

**Project Title:**

Tweedbank Expansion Supplementary Planning Guidance

**Client:**

Scottish Borders Council

**Job ref:**

10719

**Link:**

H:\1 Projects\10000\10719 Lowood SPG

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# The Process

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## Introduction

The following sets out the Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) process. Founded on strategic planning policy guidance and best practice objectives, the site context has been assessed in order to establish development zones.

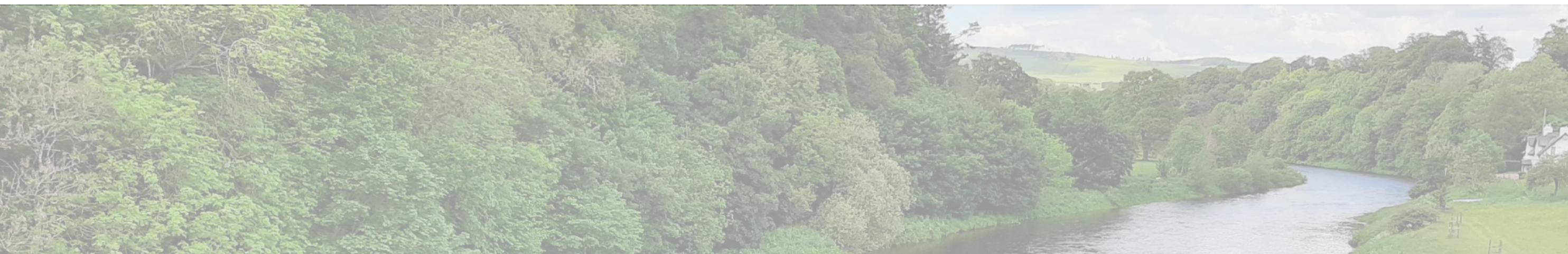


Once approved, this SPG will form a material consideration in the planning application process and inform the future development of the Tweedbank Expansion into Lowood Estate in the context of the wider Tweedbank settlement.

# Part 1 :

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# Introduction



# 1 Introduction

## Introduction

This document sets out the Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) to guide and inform the future expansion of Tweedbank within the site of the former Lowood Estate in the Scottish Borders. This SPG builds on and refines the Tweedbank Masterplan and Spatial Framework prepared for Scottish Borders Council by the architects Proctor and Matthews, agreed on 25th January 2019.

This SPG sets out the spatial framework for a residential led mixed-use development of around 9 hectares of residential units and approximately 1.5 - 2 hectares of employment land. It sets out parameters that will help realise the potential of the site in delivering high quality and sustainable development. The 34 hectare site has been assessed to establish land uses, maximum developable areas and site constraints.

This SPG is set out in two parts:

- **Part 1** sets out the site context of the Tweedbank Expansion, and identifies the main opportunities and constraints of the site. It provides an overview of the policy framework and development vision.
- **Part 2** develops on the findings of the Tweedbank Masterplan and Spatial Framework, identifying developable areas and appropriate land uses within them. It describes the requirement for an approach that is focussed on placemaking and good design to create a sustainable, vibrant 21<sup>st</sup> century community and includes a development checklist to inform future anticipated planning application requirements.

## Design Guide

Alongside the SPG, a 'Delivering Development Quality: Design Guide' has been produced to guide and inform all development proposals and planning applications relating to the site ensuring that the expansion of Tweedbank is delivered in the most appropriate form and design. It requires the use of innovative solutions which take cognisance of climate change impacts and environmental quality on the site to maximise benefits and opportunities. The Design Guide provides guidance on good design practice and seeks to balance the need to achieve specific structural goals and land use objectives, with the need to allow developers to develop appropriate and high quality solutions in collaboration with the Council.

## Planning Status of the SPG

The SPG covers the Scottish Borders Local Development Plan (LDP) period to 2025 and aligns with policy objectives set out in Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) and the Strategic Development Plan (SESplan). It will be a material consideration in assessing planning applications within the allocated site boundary. This SPG is not a standalone document and should be read in conjunction with the Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) and local planning policy including the LDP, other SPGs and SESplan.

## Location



# 2 Policy Framework

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## Scottish Planning Policy

Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) promotes the development of economically, environmentally and socially sustainable places which are of a high quality. SPP acknowledges that the planning system should allocate sites that are flexible enough to accommodate changing circumstances and allow the realisation of new opportunities – such as the development of the Lowood Estate.

The principal policies of the SPP relate to sustainability and placemaking, and that there should be a presumption in favour of development that contributes to sustainable development, and creates high quality places by taking a design-led approach. High quality places should seek to be: a successful, sustainable place; a natural resilient place; a connected place; and a low carbon place, which demonstrates the six qualities of successful place.

## Creating Places

Creating Places is a policy statement on architecture and place for Scotland. It sets out the comprehensive value good design can deliver, including physical value, functional value, social value, environmental value, and viability.

The policy statement identifies six qualities that make a place successful. These are:

- Distinctive;
- Safe and pleasant;
- Easy to move around;
- Welcoming;
- Adaptable; and
- Resource Efficient.

The policy statement recognises that good buildings and places can provide numerous social benefits. Creating a place that is accessible to all encourages increased social interaction with a strong sense of community, resulting in a safe, stable and resilient community. Improved accessibility encourages healthy lifestyles through sustainable transport modes and increased recreational use of the outdoors. This decreases the health inequalities throughout a community whilst also reducing the emissions released. The policy statement recognises the need for buildings and places to be designed to be adaptable, whilst also reducing emissions, maximising energy efficiency and climate resilience. The role of the landscape is highlighted for its potential benefits to biodiversity, water resources and air pollution.

## Designing Streets

Designing Streets is a policy statement that seeks to achieve good street design, favouring a design-led approach over a standards-based methodology. The document recognises the influence that street design can have on climate change, public health, social justice, inclusivity, local and district economies, and the overall sense of place. The statement highlights that a positive sense of place encompasses a number of aspects, most notably the street's local distinctiveness, visual quality, and its potential to encourage social and economic activity.

## Strategic Development Plan (SESplan) 2013

SESplan is the Strategic Development Plan (SDP) for South East Scotland, including the Borders. It communicates strategic level and cross-boundary planning policy for the period up to 2032, and applies national policy and guidance from the Scottish Government. It is used to inform the Local Development Plans prepared by each of the Member Authorities in the region.

The spatial strategy of the plan is underpinned by the key placemaking principles which requires development to be: distinctive, safe and pleasant, welcoming, adaptable, resource efficient and easy to move around.

It contains three overarching delivery themes relevant to the development of the Tweedbank Expansion including:

- Places to do business;
- Places for communities; and
- Better connected places.

## Local Development Plan (LDP)

The 2016 Scottish Borders Local Development Plan incorporates various land allocations in Tweedbank, including business and industrial safeguarding, mixed use, key greenspaces and the Railway Station allocation. The principle of development on the Lowood Estate was established in the Housing Supplementary Guidance, where the entire Lowood Estate was allocated for mixed use development (MTWEE002). This allocated the site as an area for housing and employment uses.

A number of policies included in the Local Development Plan will be applicable to this site including policies:

- PMD1- Sustainability
- PMD2 – Quality Standards
- PMD4 – Development outwith Development Boundaries
- HD1 – Affordable and Special Needs Housing
- HD3 – Protection of Residential Amenity
- HD4 – Meeting the Housing Land Requirement/ Further Housing Land Safeguarding
- EP3 – Local Biodiversity
- EP6 – Countryside around Towns
- EP11 – Protection of Greenspace
- EP12 – Green Networks
- EP13 – Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows
- EP15 – Development Affecting the Water Environment
- EP16 – Air Quality
- IS1 – Public Infrastructure and Local Service Provision
- IS2 – Developer Contributions
- IS4 – Transport Development and Infrastructure
- IS6 – Road Adoption Standards
- IS7 – Parking Provision and Standards
- IS8 – Flooding
- IS9 – Waste Water Treatment Standards and Sustainable Urban Drainage

## Placemaking and Design SPG

The aim of the SPG is to ensure that Tweedbank will be a quality place in which to live, providing attractive, sustainable towns and villages that are distinct and diverse. The SPG provides guidance in relation to successful placemaking and design principles and the impact this can have on the quality of life, equality of opportunity and economic growth.

The SPG recognises that good design is at the heart of sustainable communities. It acknowledges that good design is not just about the aesthetic improvement of the environment, but is as much about improved quality of life, equality of opportunity and economic growth.

The SPG identifies 19 key design principles that can be broken down into three spatial categories: wider area context, local area context, and building design.

Wider Area	Local Area	Building Design
Landscape Character	Built Character	Energy Efficient Design
Views	Built Form	Relating to the Site
Settlement pattern	Built Heritage	Relating to the Townscape
Infrastructure	Siting of Development	Scale, Massing & Form
	Layout & Legibility	Proportion
	Sustainable Development	Materials & Colour
	Density & use	Details
	Open space	

The key objectives of the Placemaking and Design SPG state that development should:

- acknowledge the local variation throughout the Scottish Borders Region (*landscape character*)
- relate positively to long, medium and short distance views from key locations (e.g. public footpaths, views from major roads) (*views*)
- integrate well into pattern of settlement, whether urban or rural (*settlement pattern*)
- be appropriately scaled and sited to maximise use of existing roads/rail/services opportunities (*infrastructure*)
- sit well within surrounding built form (architectural style, urban grain, etc) (*built character*)
- create a contextual addition to the urban fabric (*built form*)
- demonstrate a responsive understanding of the historic context of a site or area (*built heritage*)
- create a place that fits within the landscape and built context (*siting of development*)
- create streets and places that are distinctive and legible with a clear sense of identity (*layout and legibility*)
- is efficient as is practicably possible in the use of natural and man-made resources (*sustainable development*)
- create a usable place with strong sense of local identity that is adaptable to future needs (*density and use*)
- make effective use of open space and creates meaningful spaces within the public and private domain (*open space*)
- maximise energy efficiency whilst minimising use of unsustainable resources within buildings (*energy efficient design*)
- reflect a detailed understanding of the nature and characteristics of a site (*relating to the site*)
- fit well within wider townscape (*relating to the townscape*)
- create a balanced whole with a clear design concept (*scale, massing and form*)
- create a sense of unity within the building where the individual elements work in harmony with each other (*proportion*)
- utilise an appropriate palette and quality of materials and colour tones when viewed within the wider context (*materials & colour*)
- incorporate finishes and details that are of quality and integrity within the Scottish Borders context (*details*)

## Policy Context Summary

Policy Document	Key recommendations that inform this SPG
Scottish Planning Policy	Development should seek to create an economically, environmentally and socially sustainable place which is of a high quality. High quality places should seek to be successful, sustainable, naturally resilient, well-connected and energy efficient.
Creating Places	Recognises the value of good design, physically, socially, environmentally and functionally. Six qualities are recognised as being imperative for a place to be successful. A development should be: Distinctive; Safe and pleasant; Easy to move around; Welcoming; Adaptable; and Resource Efficient.
Designing Streets	Streets should be well-designed, and recognised for their important influence on creating a sense of place, climate change, public health, social justice and inclusivity, and the economy. Well-designed streets should be distinctive, inclusive and accessible, safe, aesthetically pleasing, adaptable and encouraging of social interaction and travel by active modes.
SESplan	The SESplan identifies 3 main delivery themes: that development should create places for communities, places to do business and places which are better connected. Development should provide a housing stock representative of the needs of a growing, aging population, and includes provision for affordable housing. It should safeguard and enhance the green network, recognising its important benefits for humans and nature, and should encourage travel by active modes and public transport. Sufficient land should be identified for business and employment use.
LDP	Development should be sustainable and meet the challenges of a changing climate. Development should be of high-quality, support economic development and provide for recreation and leisure. It should contribute towards meeting the housing needs of the Scottish Borders, whilst protecting and enhancing the environment.
Placemaking and Design SPG	<p>Development should be of high quality, distinctive and diverse, and should consider the wider and local area context as well as the design of individual buildings. Development should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the needs of an ageing population by providing more adaptable and accessible housing;</li> <li>• Support placemaking by creating a unique and distinctive neighbourhood which is safe and adaptable, with a strong sense of local identity;</li> <li>• Seek to ensure high quality and innovative building design;</li> <li>• Fit well within the wider built environment, in terms of settlement pattern, design, scale, massing and form;</li> <li>• Relate positively to the landscape, protecting, enhancing and creating green infrastructure and areas of open space. Development should sit well in views from key viewpoints in the surrounding landscape;</li> <li>• Encourage the use of sustainable transport modes, and promote healthier, more active lifestyles through improved access to public transport and walking and cycling routes;</li> <li>• Maximise energy efficiency through use of passive design and renewable energy; and</li> <li>• Be resource efficient, favouring reused and recycled materials, and using materials that are sustainably sourced.</li> </ul>

Historic Environment Policy for Scotland (HEPS)	HEPS is designed to support and enable good decision making about changes to the historic environment. Good decision-making takes into account all aspects of the historic environment and the different ways people value it. Good decision-making is transparent and open to challenge, and recognises that a wide range of factors can affect the historic environment in different ways. Changes might support its long-term survival, impact on its current management or even give us new information to improve our understanding of it. HEPS sets out a series of principles and policies for the recognition, care and sustainable management of the historic environment. It promotes a way of understanding the value of the historic environment which is inclusive and recognises different views. It encourages consistent, integrated management and decision-making to support positive outcomes for the people of Scotland. It also supports everyone's participation in decisions that affect the historic environment. By doing these things, HEPS helps to deliver the vision and aims of Our Place in Time. It takes into account principles that the UK and Scottish governments have agreed to in international charters and conventions on cultural heritage and landscape.
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# 3 Site Context

## Site Description

The Lowood Estate lies to the north of Tweedbank, in the Scottish Borders. It is bounded by a large meander in the River Tweed to the north, east and west, and by the settlement of Tweedbank and the Borders railway to the south. The site lies alongside Tweedbank Drive, a main road serving Tweedbank and the Tweedbank Railway Station but is currently accessed from the eastern end of the site along narrow estate roads.

Although the site is not within a national or local landscape designation, it is located approximately 130m to the west of the Eildon and Leaderfoot National Scenic Area and 420m to the north of the Tweed, Ettrick and Yarrow Confluences Special Landscape Area. The estate is not included within the Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes.

The Lowood Estate is approximately 34 ha in size. The landscape has a strong estate character and consists largely of greenfield land, with an attractive mix of large blocks of mature woodland, tree belts, and meadows. A number of outbuildings and cottages associated with the Lowood House are located in the north of the site. Historically, development has been focussed in the central/ north-western sections of the site, within the cluster of buildings associated with the estate house.

The estate lies close to existing transport infrastructure with Tweedbank Railway Station located immediately adjacent to the southern boundary of the site. The Borders Abbays Way and a Core Path runs through the site, adjacent to the river, and the Southern Upland Way passes to the south of the site. The site, being located adjacent to Tweedbank has potential to be well served by local bus stops located along the Tweedbank Drive.



Mature tree belts and woodland blocks



Local vernacular is of historic estate character



Ongoing infrastructure development



Active travel and transport provision



Defining association with River Tweed



Mature parkland and specimen trees



Tweedbank railway station



Traditional low-density residential buildings

## Topography



The levels on the site range from approximately 90m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) close to the River Tweed, to approximately 110m AOD at the highest point of the site, in Well Park. In broad terms, the land slopes east, west and north from that high point.

Topography is steeper around Well Park and Lowood Pond in the eastern portion of the site. Where the site borders the River Tweed along the north-western boundary, the land is flatter with a gentle slope leading down to the river.

The defining topographical features are two steep terraces, attributed to the river.

## Steep Embankments and River Terraces



Two steep sided ridgelines representing former river terraces cut through the site from the north-west to south-east. One is located in the north-east of the site, adjacent to the river, and the second runs around the north of Well Park and to the south of Lowood Pond.

These steep terraces provide topographical structure to the site and will inform the layout of developable zones, which can be accommodated by areas of flatter terrain.

## Floodplain



The site is bounded by the River Tweed to the north, east and west. Low lying land close to the river is subject to flooding, with the SEPA Indicative Flood Risk Map highlighting areas in the north-west and north-east. River terraces and rising ground to the south mean that most of the site lies outside this flood risk zone.

Please note that the line indicated above is for indicative/illustrative purpose only. Detailed flood risk assessments will be required as part of a detailed planning consent application where relevant, once specific locations of buildings are confirmed, in consultation with SEPA and the Council's Flood Protection Team.

## Existing Waterbody



Drainage within the site is generally good, with the steep river terraces guiding runoff towards Lowood Pond in the east of the site, and towards the railway line to the south. The gently sloping ground in the north-west of the site drains north-westwards towards the river.

The Lowood Pond is a natural feature that is shown in the previous historic maps. As well as character defining and an attractive visual asset, this feature provides good biodiversity value and supports a range of flora, fauna and insect life. Future development must ensure there is no impact on the quality and character of this site feature.

Future development zones will need to accommodate measures for surface water management within their development area. The floodplain, ridges and woodland areas will not be suitable for SuDS features.

## SSSI + Special Area of Conservation



The entire length of the River Tweed corridor, including the section that bounds the Lowood Estate is designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) due to its internationally important freshwater habitats, and its population of Atlantic salmon, sea lamprey, river lamprey, brook lamprey, and otters.

The SSSI and the SAC boundaries do extend approximately 15m into the site from the northern, eastern and western boundaries. Although the majority of the site lies outside these natural heritage designations, development at Lowood will be required to demonstrate that it will not affect the conservation interest of the Tweed.

An ecological appraisal has been undertaken to support this SPG. A summary diagram is illustrated on p21-22

## Woodland and Estate Habitats



The landscape of the site has a strong estate character, reflecting the influence of Lowood House. This is most evident in the stone estate walls, pond and areas of parkland with mature specimen trees. The areas of parkland are structured by large blocks of mature deciduous woodland and areas of productive forestry. Tree belts are present along the railway line to the south, and along the unclassified road that served Lowood. Tree belts are also found along the northern boundary of the site, adjacent to the River Tweed.

A Tree and Woodland Assessment has been undertaken to support this SPG. A summary diagram is illustrated on p20.

## Historic Core: the house and its setting

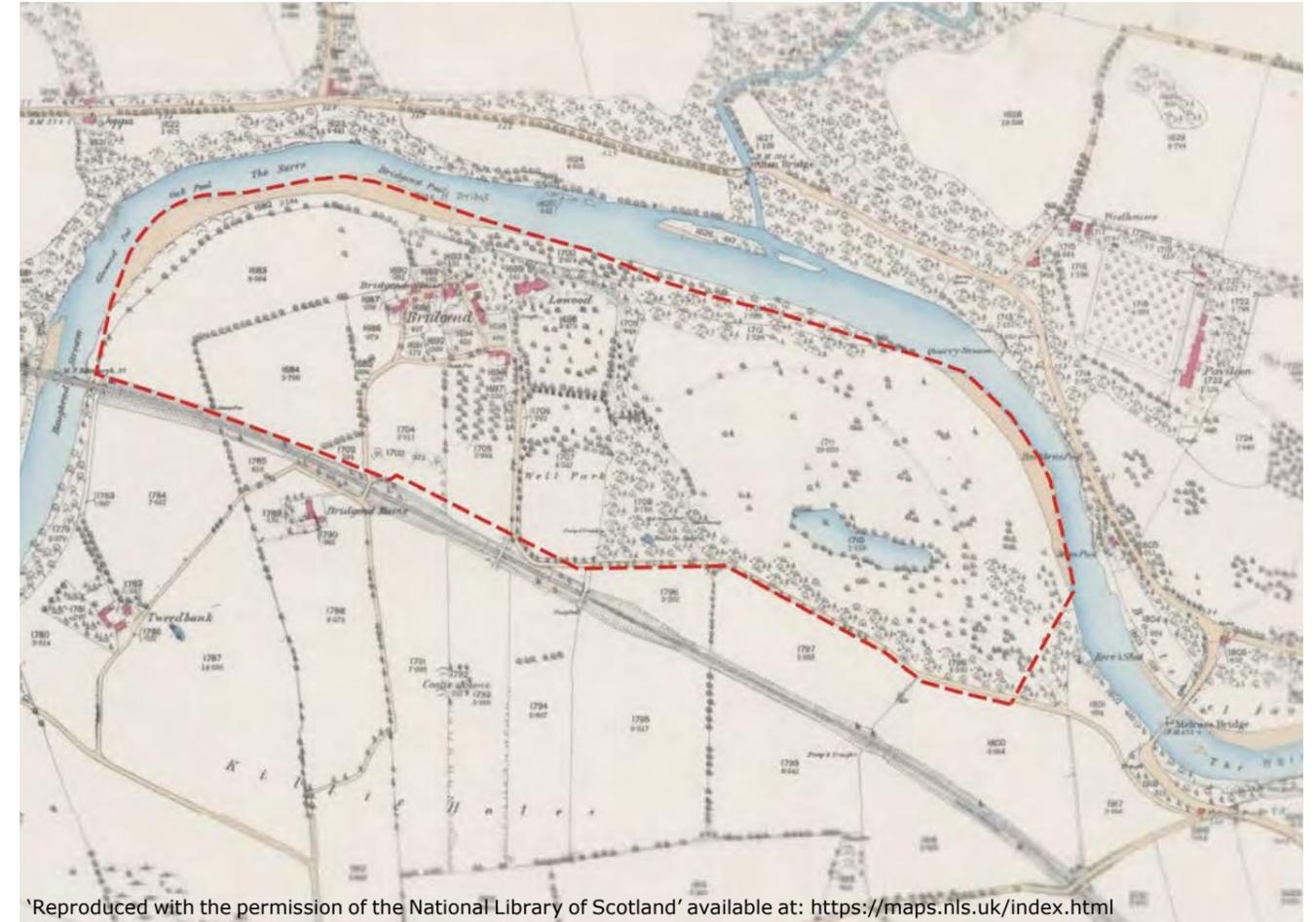


The first records of a small settlement at Bridgend - at the north part of the Lowood site - are found in the First Statistical Account for Melrose Parish in the 1790s. The size and extent of the village is unknown but the records suggest several large buildings were located there. Other sources suggest that Bridgend settlement is older, possibly medieval. While the village no longer exists the buildings present on the site date from the mid 19th Century.

In addition, the estate includes the site of a medieval bridge over the Tweed, and road extending through Bridgend to Tweedbank. The river terraces are also a likely source of archaeological evidence.

A desktop historical appraisal will be required at the early stages of any development proposal. There is potential for archaeology, particularly around the settlement core, bridge, estate parkland and river terraces. Mitigation may therefore be required. Depending on development location and form, a written scheme of investigation may be required.

## Historic Plan - 1855-1882



An analysis of historic maps dating back to 1855 shows that the built form of the site has remained largely unchanged for the past 150 years, although the cluster of buildings was extended in the south near Well Park between the 1850s and 1890s. The remainder of the site has been maintained primarily as parkland with areas of deciduous woodland particularly on steep river terraces. The only noticeable changes are amendments to field boundaries. A review of historic maps also charts the growth of residential and industrial land use to the south of the site and railway line, in the area currently occupied by Tweedbank, since 1970.

## Built Form / Listed Buildings



There is generally little built development within the Lowood site. A cluster of stone or whitewashed cottages and outbuildings associated with Lowood Estate House, are present near the site of the historic Bridgend Village. Whilst this cluster has extended southwards, to the west of Well Park, the rest of the Lowood Estate remains free of built development. Beyond the built up settlement of Lowood, the site consists mainly of parkland and deciduous woodland blocks and tree belts. The high stone walls are a defining feature and separate the site from Tweedbank station, car parking and the expanding Central Borders Business Park to the south-east of the site. No buildings or structures on the estate are listed.

Development within the area is concentrated to the south of the railway line. The settlement of Tweedbank and the Central Borders Business Park, to the south and south-east of the Lowood Estate, respectively, contrasts strongly with the open, largely undeveloped nature of Lowood.

## Rail + Settlement Context



The Lowood Estate equates to approximately a third of the size of the current Tweedbank settlement and therefore represents a substantial new neighbourhood zone. The site is well located with respect to the existing rail transport infrastructure with Tweedbank Railway Station located immediately adjacent to the southern boundary of the site. This station opened in 2015, and is the terminus for the Borders Railway line which runs from the city of Edinburgh to Tweedbank, via Newcraighall, Newtongrange, Gorebridge and Galashiels. The station is served by a large 'park and ride' carpark and a number of onward bus services.

The feasibility of a supplementary Lowood vehicle bridge is currently being progressed. For the purposes of this SPG it is assumed that it will not impact on the Lowood development area.

## Road



The site is in close proximity to the B6360 and A6091 which connect Tweedbank and Lowood with Melrose and Galashiels. There is one unclassified road within the site boundary. It serves the small cluster of properties at Lowood, and is accessed via the B6374 near the Lowood Bridge, to the east of the site. An additional private road leading to Lowood House is accessed from the bend in the B6374 immediately south of Lowood Bridge.

The site, being located adjacent to Tweedbank is well served by bus stops located along the Tweedbank Drive. A number of bus services run throughout the Scottish Borders; ten routes operate from Tweedbank Drive and the B6374, to the south and east of the site, respectively. These bus services provide connections between Tweedbank and Galashiels, Edinburgh, Jedburgh, Peebles, Melrose, and Newtown St Boswells.

## Cycle/footpath network



A number of national and local networks for walking and cycling can be found within or close to the site. The existing Core Path network (Core Path 1) is present within the site, running along the northern, eastern and western boundaries of the site, beside the southern banks of the River Tweed. This section of the Core Path network coincides with the Borders Abbays Way. These routes continue beyond the site along the River Tweed, towards Melrose and Abbotsford to the east and south-west, respectively. They connect to other established Core Paths and Scottish Great Trail routes running east and west along the River Tweed. In addition, the Southern Upland Way and National Cycle Network (NCN) Route 1 passes along the southern boundary of the site. The NCN route continues towards Melrose to the east, and along the banks of the River Tweed towards Innerleithen, to the west of Galashiels.

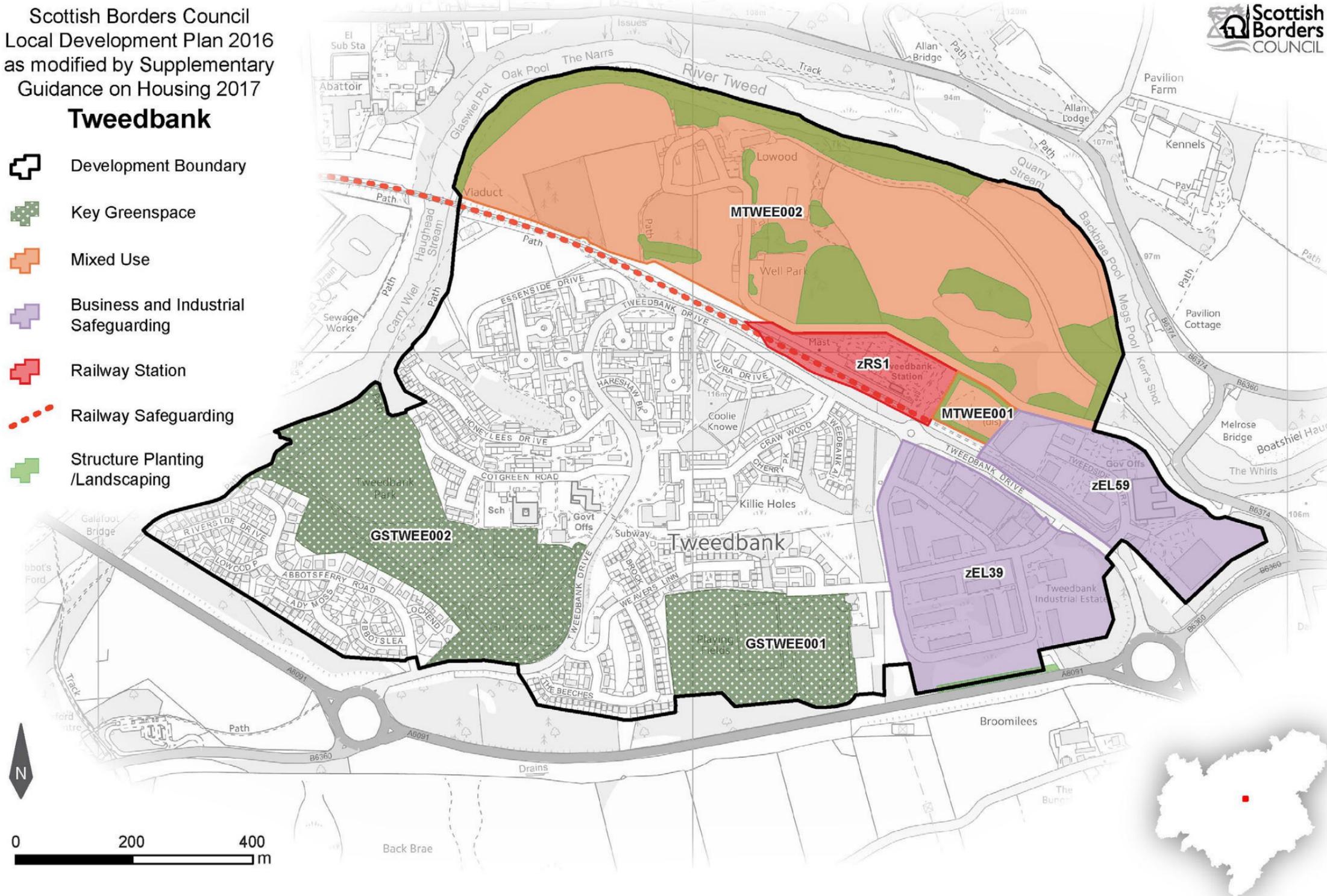
# Settlement Context - Scottish Borders Local Development Plan 2016

Scottish Borders Council  
Local Development Plan 2016  
as modified by Supplementary  
Guidance on Housing 2017



## Tweedbank

-  Development Boundary
-  Key Greenspace
-  Mixed Use
-  Business and Industrial Safeguarding
-  Railway Station
-  Railway Safeguarding
-  Structure Planting /Landscaping



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Disclaimer: Scottish Borders Council uses spatial information from a range of sources to produce the mapping contained within this document. The mapping is for illustrative purposes only. The original sources should be consulted to confirm information.

This plan represents the development context, as contained within the Scottish Borders Council Local Development Plan 2016, as modified by Supplementary Guidance on Housing 2017.  
Part of the business area to the south-east of the site is safeguarded as a Strategic High Amenity Site. This business zone will inform the development of commercial areas within the Tweedbank Expansion plan, as natural extensions of the innovation park.

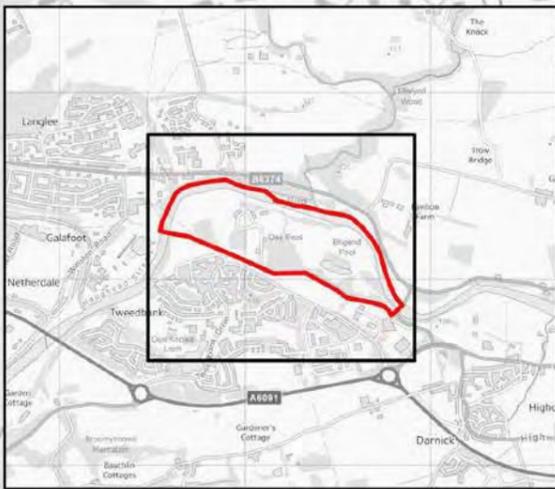
# Tree Survey Findings



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- Category A** - Area of mature trees to be retained and protected  
 A1 18,938m<sup>2</sup>  
 A2 27,540m<sup>2</sup>  
 A3 6,705m<sup>2</sup>  
 A4 9,093m<sup>2</sup>  
 A5 8,508m<sup>2</sup>  
 A6 492m<sup>2</sup>  
 A7 721m<sup>2</sup>  
 TOTAL - 71,997m<sup>2</sup>
  
- Category B** - Area of early mature plantation  
 B1 6,793m<sup>2</sup>  
 B2 11,221m<sup>2</sup>  
 B3 2,801m<sup>2</sup>  
 B4 2,711m<sup>2</sup>  
 TOTAL - 23,526m<sup>2</sup>
  
- Category C** - Area of young plantation  
 C1 12,252m<sup>2</sup>  
 C2 9,175m<sup>2</sup>  
 C3 683m<sup>2</sup>  
 TOTAL - 22,110m<sup>2</sup>
  
- Category U** - Area of unstable plantation  
 U1 8,182m<sup>2</sup>
  
- Individual trees to be removed**
  
- Land with potential for compensatory planting**  
 1. 23,089m<sup>2</sup>  
 2. 7,571m<sup>2</sup>  
 TOTAL - 30,660m<sup>2</sup>

# Ecological Survey Findings



**Lowood Preliminary Ecological Appraisal**

**Figure 1: Extended Phase 1 Habitat**

- Survey area
- Squirrel Drey
- Squirrel Foraging Remains
- A1.1.1 Broadleaved woodland (semi-natural)
- A1.1.2 Broadleaved woodland (plantation)
- A1.2.2 Coniferous woodland (plantation)
- A1.3.1 Mixed woodland (semi-natural)
- AL Allotment
- B2.2 Neutral grassland (semi-improved)
- B4 Improved grassland
- C3.1 Other tall herb and fern (ruderal)
- G1 Standing water
- G2 Running water
- HS Hard standing
- J1.2 Amenity grassland
- J3.6 Buildings
- OP Ornamental planting

**Map Scale @A3: 1:4,500**

**LUC**

Source: LUC

# Ecological Survey Findings



**Lowwood Preliminary Ecological Appraisal**

**Figure 2: Bat Roost Potential**

- Survey area

**Bat Roost Potential Structures**

- High
- Moderate
- Low
- Negligible

**Bat Roost Potential Trees**

- ▲ High
- ▲ Moderate
- ▲ Low

**BRP Categories**

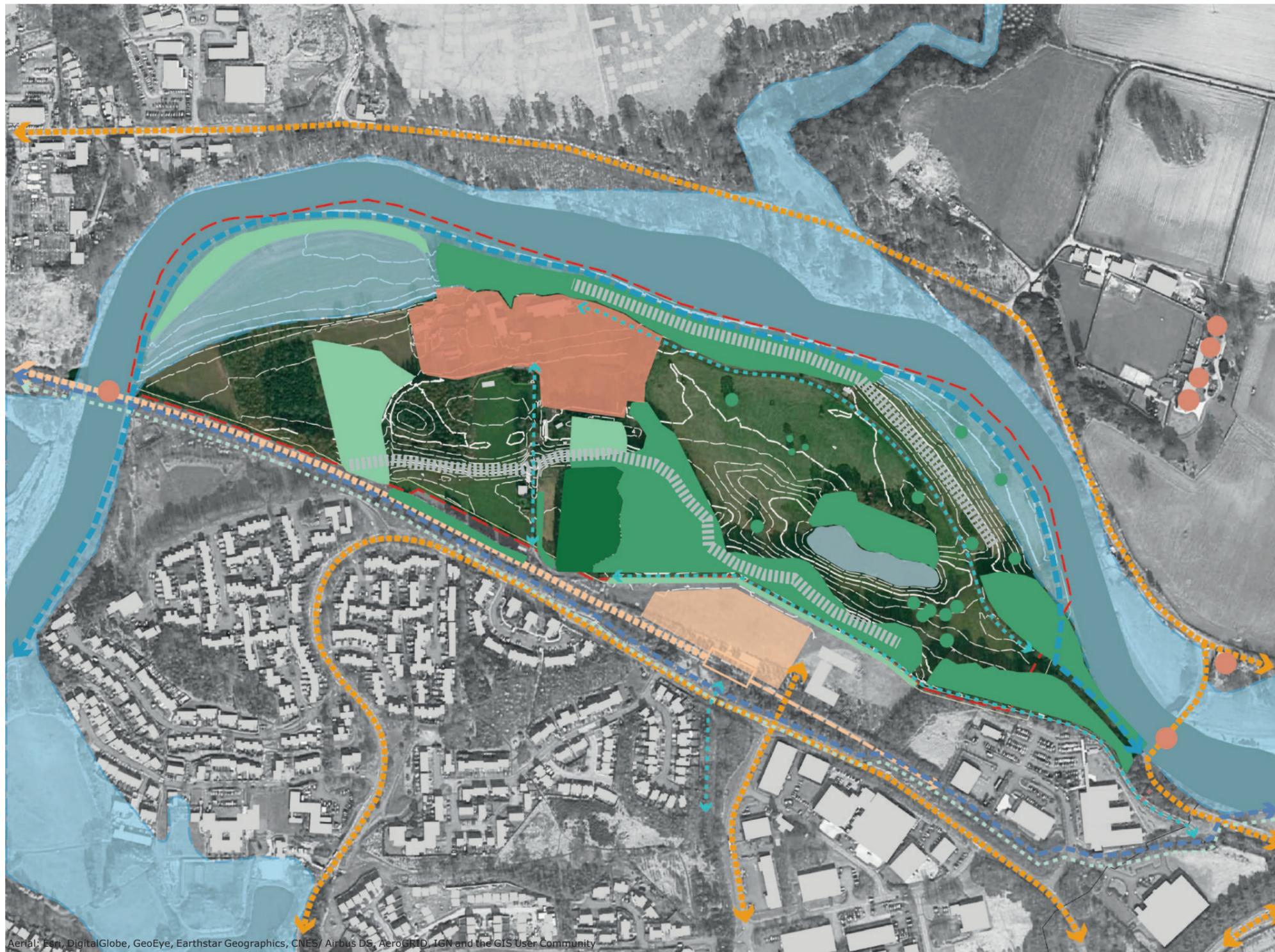
- BRP1- High
- BRP2- Moderate
- BRP3- Low
- BRP4- Negligible

**Map Scale @A3: 1:4,500**

**LUC** **Scottish Borders COUNCIL**

Source: LUC

## Overall Site Constraints: Established through the appraisal exercises



-  Site Boundary
-  Existing contours
-  River terraces
-  Indicative line of the 1 in 200 year flood extent
-  Lowood Pond
-  River Tweed - SSSI and Special Area of Conservation
-  Existing mature trees - to be retained and protected
-  Lowood House and setting
-  Existing Listed Buildings/ Structures
-  Railway line/station
-  Existing roads
-  Existing footpaths

This drawing summarises the key findings from the appraisals to set overall constraints.

# 4 Site Observations

The following images illustrate the existing character and defining features of the landscape in and around Lowood. The site is rich in natural assets, with opportunities for landscape enhancement presenting themselves. Fieldwork was undertaken in July 2019.



Veteran trees and mature tree belts are central to Lowood's character and quality. These should be retained unless there is exceptional justification such as long term health of the trees.



Estate largely hidden from public roads- any development can be contained by existing woodland. The river corridor should be protected from development.



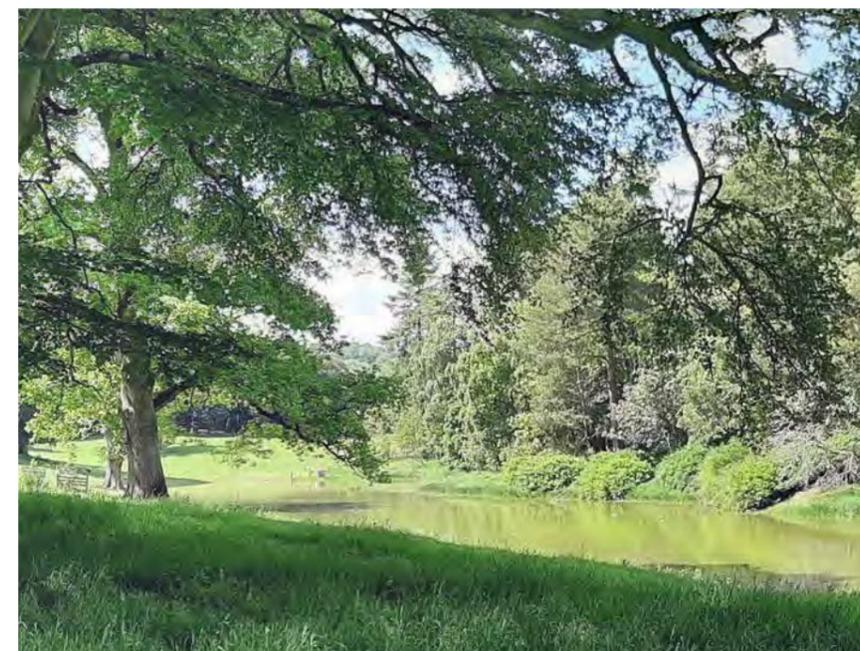
The rural character of this section of the Borders Abbays Way must continue to be safeguarded.



Views of the estate parkland from the riverside path must be safeguarded and retained.



Estate entry opens up to create a wide area of parkland largely contained and concealed from views. The character of this access contributes to the unique site characteristics.



Key natural assets such as the Lowood Pond create a distinctive sense of place.



This natural gap in the tree belt where levels are most favourable is an appropriate new vehicle access point.



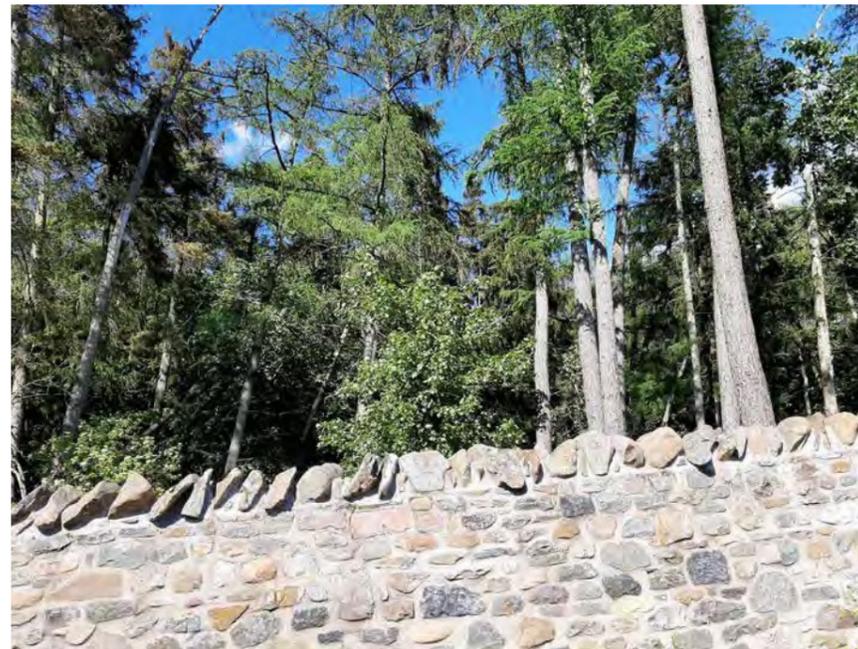
Large open pasture- screened from the riverside path and north river bank could accommodate sensitively designed development by means of retaining mature trees and a developing a strategy of new tree planting.



The mature treebelt along the ridgeline creates identity and a natural enclosure to development. This should be retained and protected.



Areas of newly established and cleared woodland are suitable for redevelopment.



Areas of plantation forest are at the end of their lifespan and should be cleared for forestry management reasons. This provides future development opportunities.



The perimeter access road with its historic wall and mature avenues should be retained and protected. This can form a new active travel corridor for pedestrian and cycle use.

# 5 Site Opportunities and Constraints

The following section sets out the key opportunities and constraints to be considered by a future developer(s):

## Opportunities

- The site offers the opportunity to create an exemplar of high quality sustainable development, that is sympathetic to the unique character of the site, whilst having its own sense of place.
- The Lowood Estate provides opportunities to develop approximately 300-400 homes and to help meet the Scottish Borders affordable housing needs, there is a requirement for 25% of residential properties to be affordable housing.
- The development of the site provides opportunities to adopt a low carbon approach to development. The site offers the opportunity to be a low carbon development with options including passive and active solar, air or ground source heat pumps and implementation of a biomass fuelled heat network. The passive design of buildings could also contribute significantly to reducing energy use.
- The proximity of the site to the existing Central Borders Innovation Park provides opportunities for the development of land in the east of the site for business and employment use. Business and employment land on this site would benefit from the existing transport links, including the numerous bus services and Tweedbank railway station which are all within close proximity to the site.
- The high quality environmental setting of the site provides an excellent location for a 'Care Village' with dementia hub, the need for which has been identified by the Council, where residents and patients could receive therapeutic care.
- The proposed development brings opportunities to increase connectivity between the site and Tweedbank, encouraging the use of sustainable transport modes and outdoor space for recreational purposes.
- The development offers potential to support access along the riverbank, encouraging recreational use of the area, connecting to popular tourist attractions nearby, including Abbotsford House, Melrose Abbey and Scott's View.
- The site provides opportunities for biodiversity net gain, through habitat protection, enhancement and creation in the undeveloped areas of the site. This valuable green infrastructure can bring significant benefits to local biodiversity, enabling increased connectivity throughout the ecological network.
- The site offers potential to enhance recreational greenspace, encouraging the use of outdoor areas, within the site, and along the waterfront.



High quality environmental setting of Lowood Estate Parkland provides opportunities for mixed use development.



Development of the site promotes connectivity between neighbouring settlements, supported by an existing network of recreational and active travel routes.

## Constraints

- Careful consideration with regards to vehicular access will be required. Currently there is one single track road which serves Lowood House and the cluster of buildings to the west and south. Widening this access would have impacts, particularly along the southern side of the estate where the road runs between the estate wall and mature trees. A new vehicular access point in the western part of the site will be required. Consideration of the impact on the existing road network will be required.
- The site is located within a broad meander along the River Tweed which is designated as a SSSI and SAC. Consideration of any potential effects on the river corridor and these designations resulting from the development is essential. Likewise, consideration of effects on biodiversity in undesignated areas of the site (e.g. areas of woodland) will be required; as such areas could provide valuable habitats for mammals and bats etc.
- Part of the site in the north and north-west is located within the high risk flood zone. There is no development opportunity within these areas although they could support wet woodland compensatory planting.
- Development must protect the potential future extension of the railway line. Any future extension could impact upon proposed access links into the Lowood Estate.
- The site is located approximately 130m west of the western most boundary of the Eildon and Leaderfoot National Scenic Area (NSA). Any impact upon the NSA must be given due consideration when assessing development proposals. In addition, careful consideration should be given to potential impacts on the Special Landscape Area located approximately 420m to the south of the site.
- Services to the development site face limitations. In particular, the Galashiels Waste Water Treatment Works (WWTW) is nearing capacity. Currently all flows from Tweedbank have to pass under the river to access the WWTW. Consideration must be given to water and sewerage provision, ensuring that the infrastructure is appropriate for the number of units developed, in consultation with SEPA and Scottish Water.
- Development will need to consider and include surface water management as an integrated approach and comply with best practice.



A new vehicle access point will be required as the existing road infrastructure has limited capacity.



Development will need to consider the ecological designations and flood risk constraints of the River Tweed.

# 6 Vision and Aspirations

## Development Vision

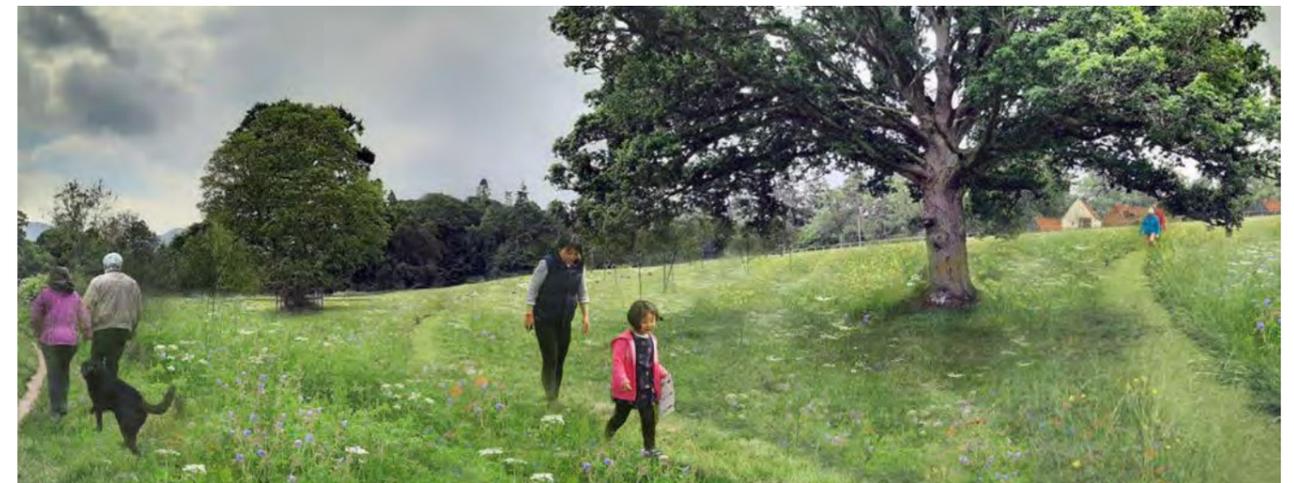
The site provides a unique opportunity to support the sustainable expansion of Tweedbank with a range of historical, cultural, economic and environmental assets to create a distinct and exemplar development with a strong sense of place. These important assets will be safeguarded and enhanced, encouraging their recreational use and enjoyment by the local community and visitors. The integrated and expanded settlement of Tweedbank will be an inclusive, well-connected and cohesive community which people will aspire to live in and visit.

The strategic objectives for the development are to:

- to deliver new development sustainably and sensitively within this attractive landscape setting;
- to create and complete a coherent, inclusive, well-connected settlement which is fully integrated into Tweedbank and which is readily and conveniently accessible from the surrounding area;
- to lead by example implementing the Scottish Government's and the Council's commitments to the achievement of net zero carbon emissions and to facilitate the establishment of a responsible, resilient, forward-looking community which responds decisively to the challenges of climate change, employing state-of-art technologies and producing its own renewable energy;
- to realise a place which embodies the concept of 20-minute neighbourhoods; that is well-laid out, designed with clear, logical linkages that appeal to residents, visitors, and business users alike; and which encourages active travel, utilises and develops the site's green infrastructure and supports healthy lifestyles;
- to deliver a development with a strong sense of place which is an integral part of Tweedbank and sympathetic to its site and setting;
- to respect the core landscape, built heritage, natural and historical environmental assets and topography of the site and its surroundings;
- to ensure that future generations will continue to benefit from the site's qualities and that this character underpins delivery of a unique sense of place;
- to support the needs and wellbeing of all members of the community within a coherent, resilient and inclusive place and;
- to deliver a development which makes nature an integral component part and which encourages and promotes biodiversity within and around the site.



Existing tracks provide excellent opportunity for foot and cycle connections to the railway station



The character of the parkland should be retained with opportunities to support enhancements to biodiversity and access



New development should be sensitively contained by retained mature trees