

## **Musselburgh Vision or settlement strategy for incorporation in the new Local Plan**

We know that a lot of housing is proposed in and around Musselburgh – far too much the Society will argue. The question is where should it go and on what basis should that decision be made?

The new Local Plan proposes a haphazard allocation based partly on sites identified by developers. There is no vision on what Musselburgh should look like in the future, no overall plan for change.

The Conservation Society has put forward an alternative. It is a vision for a lesser amount of housing provided in a more systematic way. It is based on what gives the town its identity and character now, what's good and should be preserved and protected and where development might go to cause least damage. It is not a NIMBY or anti-development strategy – it's about getting the right amount of development in the right places whilst protecting acknowledged assets.

Important factors are: maintaining separation from neighbouring settlements, the relationship with the adjoining countryside and respect for the area's history.

We have identified four open space lungs, largely areas of Green Belt, which achieve this and should be protected from development, long term in our view. They mostly comprise class 1 agricultural land and together they provide breathing space, give the town a separate identity by avoiding coalescence, bring the countryside into the town and safeguard its landscape setting, including the setting of the historic Battle of Pinkie Cleugh. These are all key planning objectives.

The four areas are:

- 1. To the west the Brunstane/Newhailes area** that separates Musselburgh from Edinburgh. Unfortunately it looks like the Brunstane area is to be developed as part of the Edinburgh Local Plan leaving only Newhailes parkland as open land here.
- 2. The open land west of the river Esk** that brings the countryside into the town from south of the A1, through Monktonhall Golf Course, all the way to the Olive Bank bridge.
- 3. The large area east of the river from Carberry, across Howe Mire and into Lewisvale Park.** This is particularly important because it is at the core of the historic battlefield site and gives the outstanding Inveresk Conservation Area its separate identity.
- 4. The north east coastal strip from Levenhall Links through to Royal Musselburgh Golf Course** including the Goshen Farm and Drummohr areas which provide an undeveloped buffer to the adjoining nature conservation area. Overall the area provides separation from Prestonpans, maintains the undeveloped waterfront, protects the designed landscape of Drummohr House and contains another key area of the battlefield site.

It is our view that there should be no significant development in these areas though one or two small sites will be suitable for housing where the aims of the strategy would not be compromised, notably the Cala Homes site at Levenhall and on land south of Whitecraig, but certainly not development at Howe Mire as proposed in the new Local Plan or on the narrow strip of land by Wallyford station that separates Wallyford from Musselburgh as is currently proposed, in a speculative planning application.

Where development should be directed now and long term (i.e. in any future Local Plan) is to the rear of existing built up areas (a) up to the A1 to the south east of the town. i.e. the Wallyford development now underway, and (b) south west of the town around QMU and Craighall where generated traffic can be directed onto upgraded A1 junctions and away from the town centre.

BARRY TURNER on behalf of Musselburgh Conservation Society

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