

Balerno Local Place Plan

Draft Proposals

Purpose – A single document detailing all the draft proposals for the Local Place Plan.

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There are some proposals which straddle two areas. They have been listed in both.

Potentially contentious proposals are highlighted in yellow, and BCC should consider preferred options. They will also be discussed at the Public Meeting on 9th July.

Balerno High School

A Local Place Plan will accordingly, in my view at least, have to consider and if so advised, make proposals on a new Balerno High School, including location.

Ref	Description of the Proposal
BHS 1	<p>Strategic Option: New Build vs Major Refurbishment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a feasibility study comparing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full rebuild (preferred by majority) Deep retrofit/modernisation
BHS 2	<p>Transform into a “Community Hub School”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design or retrofit to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public-access gym + fitness suite Upgraded swimming pool Multi-use sports halls available to community use
BHS 3	<p>Transport & Safety Redesign</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safer drop-off zones Enforced parking controls Pedestrian crossings / lights Expand: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walking & cycling infrastructure
BHS 4	<p>Facilities Upgrade Package Whether rebuild or refurb:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modern classrooms (warm, ventilated, flexible) New furniture (ergonomic seating) Upgraded: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Toilets Changing rooms (inclusive + accessible) <p>Science labs & tech spaces</p>
BHS 5	<p>Sports & Wellbeing Investment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New or upgraded: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Swimming pool Gym (dual school/community use) Multi-sport facilities beyond rugby/football Add: Outdoor learning spaces <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wellbeing/mental health areas
BHS 6	<p>Accessibility & Inclusion Improvements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fully accessible campus design Dedicated ASN/specialist support facilities Inclusive changing and learning environments
BHS 7	<p>Sustainability Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Replace single glazing with efficient systems Introduce: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Renewable heating (e.g., heat pumps) Energy-efficient lighting Embed sustainability into learning spaces

BHS 8	<p>Maintenance & Management Reform</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Implement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Planned preventative maintenance programme ● Regular condition audits ● Improve: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Responsiveness to infrastructure issues
BHS 9	<p>Capacity & Future-Proofing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ensure school is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Large enough for future population growth ● Flexible for evolving curriculum (vocational + digital + practical skills)

Bottom Line

➔ The community expects either a **new school** or a **transformational overhaul**, combined with safer transport and stronger community integration.

Deanpark Primary School

Summary of Proposal

This proposal focuses on improving the experience and safety of pupils, parents, and staff at Dean Park Primary School. It addresses significant concerns around unsafe and congested parking during drop-off and pick-up times, as well as longer-term pressures from a growing population and outdated school infrastructure. The proposal combines traffic management solutions with longer-term considerations such as additional school provision and expanded play spaces.

Ref	Description of the Proposal
DPPS1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduce designated drop-off and pick-up zones away from the school gates. Edinburgh School Streets
DPPS2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explore implementation of a temporary car-free zone during peak school times
DPPS3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish a “walking bus” initiative to encourage group walking to school
DPPS4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase signage and road markings to improve awareness and compliance
DPPS5	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consider a one-way traffic system around the school
DPPS6	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide an assisted pedestrian crossing or school crossing patrol
DPPS7	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Investigate the role of a safety officer or traffic warden during peak times
DPPS8	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assess the feasibility of a second primary school in the lower Balerno area to accommodate population growth
DPPS9	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explore options for a new or upgraded school building to replace outdated facilities
DPPS10	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improve and expand play areas in and around the school to support children’s wellbeing

Infrastructure - Digital

Proposals

Ref	Proposals
INFD1	<p>Universal Full Fibre Programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure 100% fibre coverage across Balerno • Prioritise currently underserved streets and outskirts • Require providers to publish clear rollout timelines
INFD2	<p>Mobile Coverage Improvement Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with telecom providers to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify signal “black spots” • Install targeted small-scale masts or boosters <p>Encourage infrastructure sharing between networks</p>
INFD3	<p>“Dig Once” Infrastructure Policy</p> <p>Introduce a local policy requiring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination between providers • Shared trenching and ducts • Alignment with road resurfacing schedules • Stronger standards for road/pavement reinstatement
INFD4	<p>Reliability & Resilience Standards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage/require providers to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve network redundancy • Harden infrastructure against weather disruptions • Explore backup solutions for vulnerable areas
INFD5	<p>Increase Market Competition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support infrastructure like open-access fibre networks • Make it easier for multiple ISPs to operate locally
INFD6	<p>Targeted Public WiFi Zones</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce free public WiFi in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Village centre • Community hubs
INFD7	<p>Environmentally Sensitive Rollout Guidelines</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Underground cabling where possible • Careful placement of masts • Avoid large-scale developments like data centres
INFD8	<p>Ongoing Upgrade Commitment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure infrastructure keeps pace with future tech (5G → 6G → beyond). Regular review every 5 years

Infrastructure – Green Spaces

Summary of Proposal

These proposals focuses on improving the green infrastructure (excluding Pentland Hills National Park) for all members of the community of Balerno, including the green spaces themselves, the amenities that people can enjoy within the spaces (playparks, youth facilities, seating, bins) and the paths that people use within the village to access both these spaces and other parts of the village

Ref	Proposal
INFG1	Improve path between Ravelrig/Walled Garden and Bridge Road
INFG2	Extension of Water of Leith Path further upstream into the village
INFG3	Improvement of paths in woodland area between Harlaw Road and BHS and gate access to Malleny Estate and Gardens.
INFG4	Improvement of the Water of Leith Path
INFG5	Improvement of path by creation of a bridge in the shelterbelt by Cockburn Crescent by the bus shelter.
INFG6	Creation of safer cycle routes around Balerno High School
INFG7	Path improved between the park at the back of Malleny Avenue to Harlaw Road
INFG8	Clearer signage of paths around Marchbank Park/Dean Park Primary
INFG9	Additional benches in Main Street
INFG10	Additional benches in Marchbank Park
INFG11	Outdoor Gym Equipment in Marchbank Park
INFG12	Communal BBQ facility with picnic benches would be amazing, maybe in Marchbank park
INFG13	Planting fruit trees in the wee park (and having a bench) between Deanpark Avenue and Deanpark Gardens would be nice.

INFG14	Existing patches of rough grassland or bland amenity grass turned into managed wildflower meadows / pollinator habitats
INFG15	Sheltered structure for parents and childcare workers to sit under. Communal Park areas with picnic benches and tables. Either Marchbank Park or Dovecot area.
INFG16	Develop the Ravelrig Walled Garden as a community garden
INFG17	Remove the concrete from the Roundabout at the foot of Johnsburn Road and add additional greenery
INFG18	Improvements to woodland corridors along Bavelaw Burn (Harlaw Road to Harlaw visitor centre) trees past their best/ many fallen down
INFG19	A proper shared park space to the north side of the village, the south side has Marchbank park. The north side has nothing, but the old Ravelrig estate has potential to provide space for dog walking, running or just relaxing in a park.
INFG20	More planters and hanging baskets in various locations around the village.
INFG21	Playpark at Deanpark Gardens
INFG22	Improvements to Play Park in Marchbank Park
INFG23	Play equipment for children 8+
INFG24	Skate park or Pump track
INFG25	New playpark or bike track on Harlaw Road "Bing"
INFG26	Playpark near the Rugby Club
INFG27	Improve roundabout at Johnsburn Road/ Bridge Road/ Larchfield / and Main Street

Infrastructure - Social

Social infrastructure: This refers to the network of physical spaces, facilities and services (like schools, parks, libraries, community centres) that improve social well-being.

What improvements would you like to see to social infrastructure in Balerno?

Proposals

Ref	Proposal
INFS1	<p>Create a Multi-Use Community Hub</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop (or upgrade) a central hub that includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gym + fitness classes • Youth space (dedicated teen area) • Café/social space • Workshop rooms • Model it on successful nearby hubs
INFS2	<p>Youth Strategy (High Priority)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth club + drop-in centre • Outdoor facilities (skate park, bike track, MUGA court) <p>Partner with schools and community groups</p>
INFS3	<p>Play Park Investment Programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit all parks and: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fully refurbish key sites (e.g. Dean Park, Marchbank) • Add: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusive/accessible equipment • Facilities for older children • Seating, lighting, bins • Ensure geographic spread across the village
INFS4	<p>Major Upgrade or Rebuild of Balerno High School</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritise as a capital project • Reintroduce: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community access (evenings/weekends) • Adult learning programmes
INFS5	<p>Library Transformation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand or relocate to larger space • Add: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-working / study areas • Workshops (skills, crafts, digital) <p>Community programming</p>
INFS6	<p>Health & Wellbeing Improvements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community gym (standalone or within hub) • Outdoor fitness equipment in parks <p>Improve access to swimming facilities</p>

INFS7	<p>Access & Safety Improvements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe school travel plan (cycling, walking routes) • Parking redesign near schools • Better disabled access to key sites : Balerno Community Centre; Balerno High School; Library
INFS8	<p>Protect & Enhance Green Spaces</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No net loss of green space • Improve: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paths, lighting, benches • Maintenance standards
INFS9	<p>Local Services Boost</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GP / health provision expansion • Pop-up or shared Post Office • Encouraging small local businesses & cafés
INFS10	<p>Maintenance Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faster repair response system • Regular cleaning/grounds schedule • Communicate clearly how residents can report issues
INFS11	<p>Balerno Conservation Area Character Appraisal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Last appraised 1/8/2000. To request a renewed appraisal. <p>The Balerno Conservation Area Character Appraisal emphasises the predominance of vernacular buildings within the conservation area, the consistency in the use of traditional building materials, the substantial green setting giving a rural appearance, and the wide range of uses which result in a self-contained village character.</p>

Green Belt – Development – Housing

Summary

There is overwhelming support for maintenance of the Green Belt around Balerno.

There is a prevailing view that regeneration should not extend to any expansion of the built environment. Having said that there is also serious concern about the absence of necessary infrastructure. There is also broad agreement that if there has to be development then community benefit is the absolute priority.

Proposals

Ref	Proposal
	Strategic Direction: “Improve, Don’t Expand”
GRNB1	Adopt a “Regeneration First, Expansion Last” Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritise: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgrading existing assets • Brownfield redevelopment • Explicitly limit outward growth into Green Belt
	B. Green Belt Policy (Strengthened)
GRNB2	Formal Presumption Against Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinforce “no development” stance • Exceptions only if ALL conditions met: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essential community infrastructure • No viable alternative sites • Demonstrable majority local support
	C. Regeneration Priorities (Community-Led)
GRNB3	Focus Investment on Existing Infrastructure Priority areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High school redevelopment • Healthcare (GP/dental facilities) • Transport improvements • Roads and congestion mitigation
GRNB4	Upgrade Community Facilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth hubs • Recreation/sports facilities • Event/community spaces
	D. Local Economy & Services
GRNB5	Support Small-Scale Commercial Growth <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spaces for local businesses • Improved retail offering (beyond current limited options) • Encourage local employment opportunities

	E. Housing Strategy (Targeted, Not Volume-Based)
GRNB6	Shift from Volume to Need-Based Housing Prioritise: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affordable housing • Starter homes • Downsizing properties (e.g. bungalows)
GRNB7	Restrict Large-Scale / High-End Developments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid further imbalance in housing mix
GRNB8	Brownfield-Only Housing Policy (Preferred) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Green Belt housing unless exceptional case
	F. Environmental Enhancement
GRNB9	Move to “Protect and Enhance” Model <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tree planting programmes • Community orchards • Biodiversity improvements • Maintenance of existing green spaces
	G. Public Realm Improvements
GRNB10	Invest in Everyday Environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paths and walkability • Play parks • Streetscape and public furniture • Maintenance of woodland and open spaces
	H. Infrastructure-First Rule (Reinforced)
GRNB11	No Development Without Capacity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools, roads, healthcare must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exist first, or • Be delivered upfront
	I. Community Benefit Test (Tightened)
GRNB12	Mandatory “Whole Community Benefit” Requirement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must serve broad population • Reject niche or exclusive-use developments
	J. Governance & Trust
GRNB13	Stronger Oversight of Land Use <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address stalled/unused sites • Encourage timely development of approved land
GRNB14	Transparent, Inclusive Engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Widely communicated consultation • Offline + online engagement Clear explanation of decisions

GRNB15

Balerno Conservation Area Appraisal

- The Conservation Area was last appraised in August 2000. Proposal is to request a reappraisal of the Conservation Area.

Pentlands Hills Regional Park

Summary of Proposal

To deliver a safe, well-connected and low-impact active access corridor between Balerno and the Pentlands, while safeguarding the landscape, biodiversity and rural character that make the area distinctive.

Draft Proposals

Pent 1	Create a formal proposal for a safe off-road walking and cycling route linking Balerno with Harlaw Reservoir and Threipmuir Reservoir .
Pent 2	Support a programme of incremental path upgrades rather than major new infrastructure
Pent 3	Install a coordinated network of: route markers from Balerno to the hills; walking-time signage; low-key interpretation on ecology, heritage and responsible access
Pent 4	Low-impact visitor facilities at gateway locations, facilities such as toilets; bike parking; seating; modest seasonal refreshment provision
Pent 5	Development that would urbanise, visually intrude upon or cumulatively erode the Landscape, biodiversity and rural character qualities should be resisted.
Pent 6	Recreational use of the Pentlands should be managed to minimise damage to landscape and habitats.
Pent 7	Parking management measures at Harlaw Reservoir and Threipmuir Reservoir should prioritise managing congestion and protecting local access rather than maximising revenue.
Pent 8 – Manage camping	Support a local management approach for the Pentlands based on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> designated camping areas only (if any) no fires / no disposable barbecues seasonal ranger enforcement clearer visitor information
Pent 9 – Ban camping	Camping to be restricted in the Pentland Regional Park
Pent10 - Campsite	Support a managed campsite approach for Pentlands based on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formal organised campsite area only (e.g. Camping and Caravan Club site)

Theme Area - Ravelrig Quarry

Summary

Ravelrig Quarry is a site to the north west of Balerno village. The quarry will be operational until 2050. There is currently no prospect that it would be extended beyond that date. Reinstatement of the site at closure would be the responsibility of the operator, currently Tarmac UK.

Balerno residents showed strong support for nature-based restoration through rewilding, woodland and grassland, with high demand for public access with some interest in destination leisure uses including climbing etc.

There was strong opposition to landfill and housing development, and concern to ensure management and legal guarantees of restoration.

Proposals

Ref	Proposal	Why it works
RAV1	<p>Rewilded Country Park (Best Fit with Majority)</p> <p>Core features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Native woodland, wildflower meadows, wetlands • Walking & cycling paths • Viewpoints and seating areas • Limited infrastructure (car park, signage) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matches strongest public consensus • Protects green belt character • Lower long-term impact
RAV2	<p>Nature + Recreation Hybrid Park (Balanced Approach)</p> <p>Core features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rewilded zones (biodiversity priority areas) • Managed parkland for access • Trails for walking, cycling, MTB • Small-scale facilities (café, toilets) <p>Optional additions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outdoor gym / play areas • Dog-friendly zones • Accessible paths 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meets both nature and recreation demands • Inclusive and community-focused • Still environmentally sensitive
RAV3	<p>Landscape-Led Adventure Destination (Controlled Development)</p> <p>Core features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retain quarry rock faces for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climbing • Adventure activities • Add: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trails • Water feature (lake) • Small visitor hub 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Captures economic benefits • Aligns with nearby activity hubs • Supported by a vocal minority

	<p>Constraints (critical):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No large-scale commercialisation • Blend into landscape • Strict biodiversity protection zones 	
RAV4	<p>Ecological Reserve with Limited Access (Purist Approach)</p> <p>Core features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimal intervention • Habitat restoration priority • Restricted but controlled access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximises biodiversity <p>Downside:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doesn't meet strong demand for recreation