# Profiling Peebles building stock - 2019

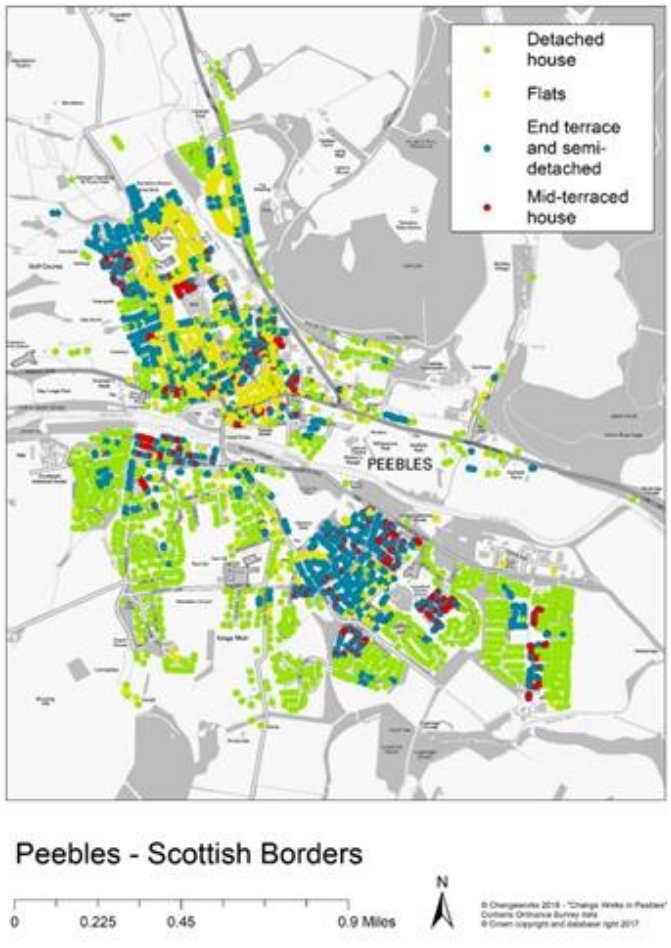
## The evolution of the building stock of Peebles[1]

The settlement of Peebles lies some 30km directly south of Edinburgh in the valleys formed by the intersection of the Tweed River (E-W) and its tributary the Eddleston Water (N-S), and abutting the Manor Hills to the south (part of the Southern Uplands). At the 2011 Census the resident population within the Town Development Boundary was recorded at about 8,000, occupying a little over 4,000 dwellings. A further 150 to 300 properties comprise business premises and public buildings (the available datasets are less precise on this matter).

There are a further 2,000 dwellings within the Peebles area but outside settlements (i.e. excluding Cardrona, Innerleithen, Walkerburn, etc.).

The town has been in times past an important river crossing point and livestock market town, and the county town of Peeblesshire – though it remained relatively small in size up until the coming of the railways in the 1860s (up to 2,000 people). From 1860s, with two railways linking the town – to urban areas to the north and west (and later to the east) – and the establishment of a number of tweed mills in the town, the settlement expanded significantly over the next 50 years up until WWI (to about 6,000).

**Fig 2 Map of the non-domestic flats, detached houses, semi-detached and end of terrace houses and mid-terraced houses in the Peebles LHEES area.**




It was over this period that most of the stone buildings (a combination of locally quarried whinstone and sandstone detailing), that provide the dominant setting and character of the town, were built. These buildings are sited mainly in the central core and northern part of the town (with terraced and semi-detached worker and artisan dwellings (with most terraced properties flatted) concentrated to the north of the River Tweed), and more disbursed and substantial detached and semi-detached villas located mainly to the immediate south of the river, with a small number of still larger estate lodges located at the edges of the settlement at this time. Almost all these stone buildings, with the exception of the estate lodges, are located within the designated Town Conservation Area.

In a shift in building use, anecdotal evidence suggests that a fair number of the stone family occupied dwellings to the north of the river were divided into upper and lower flats in the years between the first and second World Wars and just after the war – possibly a

[1] This section draws heavily on work undertaken in preparation of the Peebles Town Action Plan and the 1st stage draft of the Peebles Whole Town Masterplan, of which Crick Carleton was principal author

reflection of the casualties of war and consequential reductions in household income. Almost all the flats in the town are located to the north of the river and in the larger proportion of the stone buildings described above (see **Fig 2** – taken from Summary Baseline Data Reporting Report, prepared 5 October 20018 by Changeworks to inform preparation for the Peebles LHEES).

Some modest extension of the town took place in the inter-war years, mainly to provide additional worker housing to the north of the river to accommodate increased demand for skilled and semi-skilled workers in the mills. Dalatho Crescent and additional housing to the west of Rosetta Road are examples of such housing – mainly constructed in brick and concrete. Following WWII, in a move to shore up the operations of the mills and rebuild the local economy, additional worker estates were built to the south of the river (on land that was compulsorily purchased by the Council from the Kingsmeadows Estate). These comprised predominantly bungalows (many of these were only intended as a stop-gap measure, but are still in service some sixty years later), and terraced and semi-detached dwellings – mainly of brick construction.

What was planned as a resurgence of the tweed mills in the 1950s came to little, and over this period the town's population actually fell back to about 5,500. This fall was further compromised in the early 1960s with the closure of the railways (ahead of the Beeching cuts) – though possibly compensated to an extent by increases in car ownership and the upgrading nearby trunk roads. The local tweed industry continued to contract across the 1970s and 80s, including mill closures. The 1980s and 90s witnessed some modest housebuilding (notably estates around Damdale – where Damdale Mill once stood – and up Gallows Hill), and some broadening of the economy, including increased commuter traffic. But it has mainly been from the 2000s that expansion of the town has really taken off, with sizeable estates built out to the south, south-east, south-west and north, which mainly house families new to the area and working outside the Peebles economy – mainly to the north (Penicuik, Pentlands Science Cluster and Edinburgh) but also to the east. Since 2000 this expansion has created something like a 30 per cent increase in the built footprint of the town.

## Housing and occupier mix[2]

In terms of **private housing**, the mix of housing types and ownership, Peebles has more owner occupiers than the Scottish or Borders averages, and has more owner occupier flats than the Scottish and Borders averages.

There are very few tenemented buildings in the town (mainly along High Street and Old Town).

Almost all flats are located to the north of the river, and most of those in stone buildings. Most flats are owner occupied.

Private flat and house rentals are low relative to other towns and urban environments.

**Table 1 – mix of housing types in Peebles**

| Housing type | Owner Occupied | Social Tenant | Private Renting | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Flats total | 811 | 484 | 278 | 1,573 |
| Houses total | 2,099 | 258 | 165 | 2,522 |
| **Total** | **2,910** | **742** | **443** | **4,095** |

In terms of **social housing**, most is in premises built between 1925 and 2000 – around the Old Town, Northgate, Damdale in the centre of the town, in Dalatho Crescent along Edinburgh Road, and in the housing estates built on the former Kingsmeadows Estate in the 1950s and 60s. More recent additions have been in and around Kingsland Square, and at the newly built Dunwhinny complex.

[2] This draws on research work undertaken as part of the CWiP project – "Summary Baseline Data Reporting – LHEES Peebles, Scottish Borders"; work commissioned by Paul Gilbert, Energy Efficiency Strategy and Policy Officer at SBC and undertaken by Marjan van de Weg, Consultant Data Analyst, Changeworks.

**Managed care facilities** are located off the Old Town, on Tweed Green, Dovecote Lade, Rosetta Road and at the head of Innerleithen Road.

In terms of **"public" buildings**, there is a small medical care facility at Hay Lodge Park, alongside two doctor's practices at the Hay Lodge Medical Centre (the only medical facility in Peebles). There is a community care / drop-in facility at Victoria Park, and a Community facility at the Drill Hall, Walker's Haugh. The main town exhibition space / complex is the Chambers Institution off the High Street, which incorporates the Burgh Hall, Old Burgh Chambers, the library, the Tweeddale and Buchan Museums, and a shared facility comprising the Tourist Office and a local Council administrative centre. To the north of the town is the former Peebles County Hall (formerly the Peebles Workhouse) off Rosetta Road, which currently houses some SBC Council services and the police station. There are seven churches in Peebles, each with attached hall / meeting rooms. Three other churches have been repurposed in the latter part of the 20th century – one as the Eastgate Arts Centre, one, at the foot of Elcho Street Brae, as sheltered housing, and the third, on Greenside, replaced by housing. There is a sports complex at The Gytes and another attached to the High School. There is a swimming pool by Tweed Bridge where the former Thorburn's Mill once stood. There is one Secondary School (enrolment of about 1,350 – the largest in the Borders), and three Primary Schools.

In terms of **commercial premises**, these are concentrated along the High Street, Northgate and Old Town (designated as the Town Centre), and in the South Parks Industrial Estate and Cavalry Park Business Estate. There are a large number of pubs, restaurants and cafes in the centre of town, plus three significant hotels – The Peebles Hydro on the eastern edge of the town, the Park Hotel at the eastern end of the High Street / Eastgate, and the Tontine Hotel in the centre of the High Street. There are a small number of business outliers – one shop to the north of the river and one shop to the south, a large supermarket off Dovecot Road, plus a veterinary practice, some hairdressers, workshops, etc. dotted around town. In addition, however, there are thought to be upwards of a hundred (perhaps two hundred) businesses operated from domestic premises – including, for example, most painters and decorators, joiners, plumbers, etc..

## Changeworks analytics

As part of the background work undertaken by Changeworks in support of the Peebles LHEES process and the Change Works in Peebles projects, a range of assessments of building stock, energy demand, and energy efficiency of buildings has been undertaken, and a number of outcomes of this analysis are reproduced here.

**Table 2 Property types and age-bands of the domestic properties in the LHEEs area.**

| | Pre-1919 | 1919-1949 | 1950-1983 | 1984-1991 | 1992-2002 | Post-2002 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Flats** | | | | | | |
| Block of flats | 47 | 8 | 0 | 23 | 81 | 9 |
| Flat in mixed use building | 108 | 2 | 8 | 0 | 3 | 2 |
| Large block of flats | 64 | 0 | 36 | 34 | 18 | 42 |
| Small block of flats/dwelling | 486 | 274 | 159 | 56 | 72 | 6 |
| **Flats (total)** | **705** | **284** | **203** | **113** | **174** | **59** |
| **Houses** | | | | | | |
| Detached house | 171 | 63 | 288 | 86 | 321 | 124 |
| Semi-detached house | 237 | 146 | 259 | 39 | 98 | 5 |
| End-terraced house | 83 | 24 | 202 | 15 | 18 | 34 |
| Mid-terraced house | 52 | 30 | 183 | 18 | 18 | 43 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Houses (total)** | **543** | **263** | **932** | **158** | **455** | **206** |
| **Total** | **1248** | **547** | **1135** | **271** | **629** | **265** |

**Table 2** shows the distribution of housing types by age of construction. Most flats have their origins in the late 19th century. Most houses were constructed in the second half of the 20th century, though the analysis does not appear to include perhaps another 300 houses constructed in the last 12 years.

**Table 3 Wall construction and insulation status of domestic properties in LHEES area.**

| Housing type | Cavity Construction | Solid Brick or Stone | System Built | Timber Frame |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Flats total | 806 | 614 | 0 | 118 |
| *Flats uninsulated walls* | *80* | *580* | *0* | *0* |
| | *(10%)* | *(94%)* | | *(0%)* |
| Houses total | 1,417 | 746 | 41 | 353 |
| *Houses uninsulated walls* | *274* | *561* | *2* | *0* |
| | *(19%)* | *(75%)* | *(5%)* | *(0%)* |
| Total | 2,223 | 1,360 | 41 | 471 |
| *Total uninsulated walls* | *354* | *1,141* | *2* | *0* |
| | *(16%)* | *(84%)* | *(5%)* | *(0%)* |

**note that the properties with no data on wall construction type of insulation status have been left out of this table*

**Table 3** gives a sense of the significant extent of likely uninsulated outer walls of flats and houses of different construction forms.

**Table 4** gives an indication of distribution of households likely to be in fuel poverty, highlighting a number of statistical datazones (sub-areas of the settlement of Peebles) where these are considered highest. These areas of highest incidence are all located to the north of the town.

**Table 4 Datazones in the LHEES area with zoning statistics. Grey rows indicate where the statistics are higher than the local authority's average. Bold datazone indicate they are appropriate for an area-based grant funded energy efficiency scheme.**

| Area | House-holds | Fuel Poverty risk (%) | SIMD income deprived (%) | Council tax AC (%) | %Owner occupancy |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Scottish Borders Council | | 45% | 10% | 62% | |
| **S01012253** | 526 | 52% | 9% | 77% | 53% |
| **S01012251** | 520 | 49% | 12% | 89% | 56% |
| **S01012250** | 4 | 49% | 2% | 24% | 100% |
| **S01012252** | 333 | 49% | 15% | 70% | 59% |
| **S01012255** | 546 | 49% | 8% | 41% | 68% |
| S01012262 | 52 | 43% | 8% | 40% | 73% |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| S01012254 | 432 | 41% | 5% | 56% | 73% |
| S01012260 | 371 | 36% | 6% | 62% | 69% |
| S01012257 | 421 | 31% | 6% | 70% | 74% |
| S01012259 | 333 | 30% | 1% | 5% | 92% |
| S01012258 | 312 | 25% | 2% | 2% | 94% |
| S01012256 | 285 | 25% | 3% | 23% | 90% |

The extent to which remedial action is assessed as necessary and feasible to improve the EPC rating of the housing stock has estimated as part of this analytical work, and the number of properties amenable to different treatments, with an estimation of the likely costs of such remedial work are listed in **Table 5**. If all identified householders / owners were to undertake such upgrade work, this would indicate a potential building upgrade and heating market of the order of £17M.

**Table 5 – Estimation of the number of properties where remedial upgrade work would be appropriate and feasible, with an indication of the likely total costs of such work**

| Measure | Number of suitable properties | % of Domestic housing stock | Estimated total costs (£) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Loft insulation virgin** | 375 | 9% | £121,250 |
| **Loft insulation top-up** | 1,299 | 30% | £325,040 |
| **Cavity Wall Insulation** | 341 | 8% | £161,505 |
| **External wall insulation** | 1 | 0% | £8,000 |
| **Internal wall insulation** | 1,172 | 27% | £8,090,000 |
| **Double or secondary glazing** | 614 | 14% | £3,571,910 |
| **Total** | | | **£12,277,705** |

| Measure | Number of suitable properties | % of Domestic housing stock | Total costs (£) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Solar thermal (hot water)** | 989 | 23% | £3,956,000 |
| **(Air source) heat pump** | 19 | <1% | £133,000 |
| **HHR heaters** | 521 | 12% | £1,138,830 |
| | | | **£5,228,377** |

For commercial properties the basis of analysis is less secure. The core variable that is needed for analysis is the likely current EPC rating of all business premises. This, however, is only available for a small proportion of such premises (67 are listed on the confidential government EPC database). Accordingly, for the approximately 231-288 commercial / non-residential properties in Peebles, the EPC ratings for the 67 properties that are

available to Changeworks have been used to extrapolate likely composition EPC ratings across all commercial buildings. The output of the analysis is summarised in **Table 6**. Assuming that the limited availability of EPC records is still a representative sample of the whole of non-domestic properties, there is a substantial potential to improve the non-domestic stock, and the range of upgrade routes and participants that might be appropriate are listed in **Table 7**.

**Table 6 – Representation of the Energy Efficiency bands in the non-domestic EPC data.**

| Energy Efficiency Band | Percentage addresses in band (and number) | |
|---|---|---|
| B | 1% | (1) |
| C | 17% | (11) |
| D | 9% | (6) |
| E | 17% | (11) |
| F | 10% | (7) |
| G | 46% | (31) |

**Table 7 – Estimation of the likely numbers of non-domestic premises that would benefit from various forms of energy efficiency upgrade**

| Measure | Total (%) | Offices | Retail and restaurants | Other |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Number of properties with EPC** | 67 | 20 | 32 | 15 |
| **Floor insulation** | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| **Loft insulation** | 7 | 1 | 1 | 5 |
| **Roof insulation** | 10 | 1 | 1 | 8 |
| **Cavity wall insulation** | 12 | 1 | 2 | 9 |
| **Secondary glazing** | 26 | 5 | 12 | 9 |
| **Double glazing** | 39 | 10 | 18 | 11 |
| **Ground source heat pump** | 7 | 1 | 1 | 5 |
| **Air source heat pump** | 27 | 11 | 8 | 8 |
| **Solar thermal** | 24 | 8 | 6 | 10 |