

Sedbergh Economic Partnership – Meeting Notes

11am, 28 April 2023

Attending: Andrew Cobb (Chair), Joanne Golton, Sam Butcher (WAF), Janey Hassam (SPC), Chris Woods, Tony Roberts, John Barraclough, Jim Atkins, Claire Huggonson, Ian MacPherson, Gillian Holmes (WAF), Debbie Wilson, Cllr Hazel Hodgson, Cllr Kevin Lancaster, Claire Robinson

Apologies: Peter Marshall, Debbie Richardson, Francine Bult, Matt Williams (WAF), James Ratcliffe, Tony Reed-Screen, Peter Stockton (YDNP)

1. Welcome and Actions

- AC welcomed everyone to the meeting.
- Nursery - Claire Robinson provided an update on Speckled Hen Nursery, which opened on the 17 April. To accommodate staff levels/ training, the nursery is opening in phases over the coming weeks and will open from 8:00am until 5:30pm. The Nursery is in a lovely setting and the children have enjoyed trips to the park and the library. The venue can accommodate up to 20 children and five staff; it is on a three-year lease but it is expected to outgrow its current location. CR thanked Gill Holmes and the County Council for the grant it received for outdoor play equipment.
- Parking and Highways - Highways engineers and local WAF councillors met with Sedbergh PC representatives last week. The meeting covered traffic safety, parking strategy and all highways' issues across Sedbergh. A potential wider-area parking review was discussed but it could be some years away. SPC received agreement to realign streetlamps correctly on pavements, sort yellow lining and road markings at Settlebeck School, Highfield Road, Busk Lane brow, all within the next 12 months. SEP members raised other highways issues including the poor condition of the road from the motorway down Black Horse Hill. **ACTION: HH** to follow up
- Coach Parking - discussed idea for coach parking at New Bridge and drop off on Loftus Hill, officers confirmed it would require funding support (*possible SPF) and potentially operate for 11 months of the year (to accommodate Appleby Horse Fair parking restrictions). There would be a requirement to amend the YDNP Local Plan proposed allocations as it shows New Bridge as important green space. **ACTION: JG** to make comment as part of response to consultation document.
- Station Road 106 - £12500 available to be spent within 5 years. Currently no scope for a crossing near to the new Nursery site/ school entrance as there is no pavement on one side of the road. Future development (at the tennis courts) may bring about delivery of a pavement/ new crossing.
- JG circulated draft response to Birks Farm planning application, all approved. **ACTION: JG** to submit response to YDNP.

2. Cumbria Tourism

Ben Melling from the business development team gave a brief introduction into the new LVEP visitor economy status for 11 destination management organisations, including CT. This does not bring additional funding but opens routes and access to potential funding/ training/ toolkits etc. Ben also briefly covered the government consultation on short-term lets and CT are collecting responses from the hospitality industry.

Presentation given on the MyCumbria card scheme, the individual price is £20 enabling the card holder to receive discounts on meals, accommodation, entrance to visitor attractions, rail travel etc. A key aim for SEP is to maximise publicity, promotion and visitor opportunity for Sedbergh and one idea is to become the 1st MyCumbria town. As a result, itineraries could be developed and promoted encouraging Cumbria-based visitors to the town and help boost business/ profile. **ACTION: BM** to visit Sedbergh to sign up businesses and discuss town-wide plan further. Other ideas could include local groups giving talks such as the Historical Society, the card could be a good opportunity for local groups to grow their audience. Recognised that there is a definite need to promote Sedbergh and Kirkby. **ACTION: HH** to discuss with WAF economic development team.

3. Planning

Government Consultation – Government Consultation – as Peter Stockton was on holiday, Jim Atkins kindly introduced the government consultation on holiday lets. There are currently 1323 homes in Sedbergh with 170 used for ‘holiday lets’ and second homes.

The consultation is on a new use-class for short-term lets, properties would need planning permission to change to holiday letting, including Airbnb etc. The consultation refers to change of use being allowed under permitted development rights - this could enable accommodation owners to change use unless there was a specific planning rule in place. This permitted development right can be removed under Article 4 directions which local planning authorities have to apply for. All noted that the government consultation relates to new properties only, not retrospective ones; and that Article 4 directions are expected to be based on a street rather than a town or a National Park.

Those present were supportive of principle but needs to apply to wider areas and to second homes, also should affect all existing holiday-lets not just from now onwards. **ACTION: JG** to draft a response to the consultation, relaying ‘step in right direction but deficiencies need to be addressed’. Suggest look to Welsh and Scottish ways which have also used the initiative to raise monies to tackle affordable housing. The deadline for response is the 7 June.

Local Plan – JG presented the draft allocation maps which identified 4 sites put forward in Sedbergh for consultation and sites that were dismissed. The original list of sites envisaged delivery of 510 houses but this has been rounded down to 4 sites and 92 homes. There is also a site at nearby Millthorpe for 10 homes. SPC is expected to respond directly to consultation. **ACTION: JG** to meet with subgroup to draft SEP response.

Response to include town centre shift and tight planning boundaries perhaps may prevent more homes from being built because of the exception site rules/ effect on viability. The Framework for Growth encourages delivery of 130 houses (10% of existing stock) by 2040 to help fill capacity, remain sustainable and continue to support existing services and employment needs of local businesses.

4. Reorganisation

Structure – All senior personnel and departments are in place with essential services transitioned over. Stabilisation plan in place currently with everyone doing the same jobs, for now. The new Locality Board will meet on the 10 May, made up of all elected members from the old South Lakeland district area; they will discuss local provision, budgets, devolution decisions at that meeting. Gill Holmes will be looking after the locality boards and will keep us informed.

Shared Prosperity Fund – the 3 former local authority SPF plans have merged and a new Prospectus and Project call is expected at the end of May with community, businesses, rural businesses (capital funding) all included. This is for current financial year spend. The intervention numbers (e-numbers) have been streamlined to theme areas. Details on the scheme were put out in a press release yesterday, **ACTION: SB** to share. All advised to submit individual project applications rather than a town-wide approach. Any rural bid enquiries should go directly to SB.

Impact on local organisations – expected further devolution to parish councils, local groups, asset transfer etc but no news currently. SPC already looks after market, car parks and recycling and is well placed to do more, compared to other smaller parish councils. More delegated budgets/ assets are expected and SPC stressed the need for more financial support to take on any additional projects. Hazel expects communities to move more to self-governance, **ACTION: HH** to share more information when available.

5. Main Street news

Cycling initiative – the JG informed SEP of plan to develop a new scheme to attract cycling visitors in the quieter periods. Nick Cotton working with James at the Black Bull and will update as project progresses.

Need to link to e-bikes and bike maintenance - perhaps it could fit well with a funding bid to YDNP and SPF, **ACTION: JG** to follow up with WAF economy team. Noted that Farfield Mill offer an electric bike charging facility (need to promote this) and that there are further e-bike links at Borrett and Millthrop.

Café culture – a new cafe has opened at the former Three Hares site, Gun Dog Cafe. The cafe will open on Tuesday to Sunday and Duo Cafe is opening on Wednesday again which means 7-day cover for Sedbergh. The new cafe provides eat in and takeaway.

Electric charging – SPC about to go out for tender for the electric charging points in both car parks. Farfield Mill will incorporate electric charging into their car parking area once the nearby substation is upgraded.

SEP welcomed the news that the Post Office/ delivery office is staying. There were 2700 letters of support and well done to everybody involved.

Framework for Growth

The Sedbergh Framework for Growth was written in 2021 and is due to be refreshed. This is alongside the Sedbergh Economic Partnership's own terms of reference which were last refreshed in 2019. The documents need to be looked at again so that SEP remains fit for purpose going forward. **ACTION: JG** to oversee small sub-group to update both documents and bring back to the group.

6. Any other business

- Broadacres Housing are looking for community projects to support. Broadacres contributed of £500 to the new defibrillator at the Medical Centre. Other potential recipients could include Queens Gardens, Farfield Mill, TIC, allotments etc. **ACTION: JG** to circulate details.
- The new council's net zero project is to look at impact on communities, specifically to look at own practises of reducing grey water excess and surface water. The Council will offer grants to communities to help do this. There may be potential for SPC to offset their surface water drainage charges for the main car parks. **ACTION: HH** to investigate and let SPC know outcome.

Next meeting 11am, Friday 9 June at the Hirst Centre, Sedbergh