

# Sedbergh Economic Partnership – Meeting Notes

11am, 10 June 2022

**Attending:** Andrew Cobb (Chair), Ian McPherson, Joanne Golton, Janey Hassam, Peter Marshall, Peter Stockton, Sam Butcher, Tony Reed-Screen, Debbie Richardson, Cllr Robin Ashcroft, Sarah Campbell, Gillian Holmes, Cllr Hazel Hodgson

**Apologies:** Matt Williams, Cllr Nick Cotton, Cllr Suzie Pye, John Barraclough, James Ratcliffe, Chris Wood, Francine Bult, Cllr Kevin Lancaster, Carol Moffat, Debbie Wilson

## 1. Welcome and Actions

- The Town Twinning Group met on Monday, trying to re-establish a committee and projects. Settlebeck School reported much benefit from the exchange visits. The town twinning group are hoping to confirm a visit from the Slovenian ambassador on 25 July.
- Childcare – wraparound care at Sedbergh Primary School will start in September. SEP met with the school and provided funding sources to help capital improvements to a classroom to accommodate the breakfast club and afterschool club. Well done to the governors and school for taking this decision, it will really help working parents.
- The Parish Council reports that a grant application has been submitted for electric vehicle charging points in Josh Lane car park.
- Reminder that the Cumbria Dark Skies Festival will run from 28th of October.
- Housing - Sedbergh has received media coverage regarding the number of vacancies in the town. An article was in the Westmorland Gazette and an interview was given by Joanne on BBC Radio Cumbria. Housing problems are a significant issue throughout the district and SLDC requested that we share any solutions with other communities. **Action: Joanne** to find out about solutions in Keswick as they have been experiencing similar problems.
- **Action: SPC** to circulate letter from United Utilities regarding pollution in the river.
- Peter, Andy, Tony and Joanne met with Tim Farron MP on 19 May and discussed several areas where his support would be welcomed, including new housing, extra care facilities, youth mobility scheme, recruitment shortages, community transport and levelling up funds.

## 2. Partner Updates

**Farfield Mill** gave a short presentation (to be circulated). Following the pandemic, the Mill took the decision to abolish admission fees to help grow visitor numbers. This has proved successful and the lost revenue is being made up via sales in the shop and tearoom. The lockdown provided a good opportunity to improve the building. The Mill is open Wednesday to Sunday and had a record 24,000 visitors last year. There's very few coach or group tours currently but this is an area to grow. Exhibitions change every three months and there is a new community gallery in situ. Ideas are being considered for more child friendly areas.

The Mill is a member of Cumbria Tourism and all need to use Mill imagery as much as possible to help promote this important asset and the town. Opportunity to direct visiting parents from the Sedbergh Summer Courses and all other events this year. The Mill have submitted an Arts Council bid to increase community engagement. **ACTION: Debbie** to circulate presentation and contact Settlebeck School regarding visits.

**Sedbergh and District Community Trust** was established in 2009. The trust has allocated over £250,000 in local grants during that time for various projects and to groups and events. The Trust has an income of £25-30,000 a year derived from the charity shop and second-hand bookshop. **Action: Tony** to provide further details on request.

**Sedbergh Parish Council** is focussed on several key projects over the next 12 months. These include the Joss Lane Car Park enhancement to the surfacing and the recycling area and the Queens Gardens with a new bandstand development for events, children's activities, music recitals etc. SPC is also hoping to undertake a street lighting review as part of a drive to reduce light pollution, working with the dark skies project officers of Friends of the Lake District and Yorkshire Dales.

The Homes for Ukraine sponsor scheme has approved two host families in Sedbergh. However, there are six families wanting to come so urgent that more sponsors come forward. The good work of the Sedbergh Together Network was noted.

### **3. Shared Prosperity Fund**

There was a detailed discussion on the new funding stream from Government, which will be facilitated and delivered to a range of groups by SLDC (then the new authority). Consultation is underway with local groups and strategic partners to help provide content for the SLDC Investment Plan – to be submitted to Government on the 1 August. The consultation will help focus priorities and projects to be sifted by SLDC officers and Cabinet members – deadline for proformas is 27 June. Sedbergh has several areas which could benefit from this funding. **ACTION: SPC** to consider LIPS funding for some key projects.

SEP will put forward a bid for funds and will be involved in the consultation process. There is a need to focus on human capital, shovel-ready projects and those that are impact heavy. SEP will look to include a number of initiatives that support collaboration between businesses, education and growing the local economy. Projects will support people accessing work and opportunities for apprenticeships, entrepreneurs, start-ups and increasing business confidence. **Action: Joanne** to circulate draft proposals.

### **4. Projects Update (Growth Framework)**

**Childcare** - Tony reported that several venues have been looked at for a new full time day nursery in Sedbergh. The Scout Hut in Kings Yard is now a likely option for a small start-up nursery (or creche until full status approved by Ofsted). This will be a temporary arrangement until a permanent solution can be found on a new site in Sedbergh. It should have approximately 20 to 25 spaces and will support a large number of local children fulfilling some of the 50-60 spaces required.

**Accommodation** – Peter reported an interested investor for a 'halls of residence' style building for local workers. This would see local employers guaranteeing a lease for 1 or more rooms which they would then fill with their own employees on a short- medium term basis. It would mean a guaranteed rental income and could prove very helpful to the housing shortage, particularly single person combination. The Station Road site is expected to start this month. Lookaround featured an article on the proposed lodgings/ Accommodation Bureau project and Joanne has spoken with local businesses to see if they provide legal support. A social media campaign will start soon to promote the project.

**Transport** - Peter provided an overview of the school bus project which will help staff travel to Sedbergh from outlying areas. The service is for staff locally, to be transported in and then for staff from further afield. The project will be extended to include other Sedbergh based workers from outside the town. **ACTION: Peter M** to contact Langdale Timeshare as they run a similar staff bus. Settlebeck commended the idea and reported that their teaching assistants would be using the service. This will help to keep young people working locally and supporting local families without a car – further helping local employment, school roll numbers and vitality of the town.

**Business Network** - Joanne provided an update. The portal is built and awaiting populating. Need to progress this first before engaging in events, network meetings etc. Administrative support is sought to help complete the task. Sedbergh School are producing a new app with a hospitality business directory

so there will be some crossover. **ACTION: Joanne** to provide list of tasks for the site to Sedbergh School and to meet to see if joint working can be applied.

## 5. Planning Matters

**YDNP Local Plan** – Peter reported that the local plan preferred options paper is due out on 24th June. YDNP are committed to building 50 houses per year, up until 2040, 800 houses in total. A good number of sites have been put forward and a public consultation on the preferred allocations will be in September or October. Officers are currently looking at site constraints and talking with utility providers stakeholders etc. New YDNP policy will mean all new housing will be ‘principal housing’ to help any new housing development meet local need rather than external demand, affecting values by approx. 5%. This policy has been applied in other national parks so precedent exists. No employment sites have been submitted as part of the local plan. In line with policy YDNP could permit new community/ employment sites on the edge of town or with in the development boundaries on unallocated sites.

**YDNP planning applications** – the Baliol project continues but it is still in limbo as contrary to current policy which would mean it likely to be refused. However, it is still in the process so watch this space. Sedbergh School report that the Astro-turf project is soon to appoint a contractor and should finish in Spring 2023. Conversations are ongoing with YDNP regarding the new Technology Centre planning application and this should be submitted on the 7 July, hopefully resulting in an opening in September 2024. Seven residential units are planned for Kings Yard and planning application submission is expected soon. There is a jubilee plantation planned for the area near the new Astro-turf site. **Action: Peter M** to re-arrange Tech Centre meeting with SLDC prior to submission of planning application.

## 6. Any other business

**ACTION: Joanne** to invite SLDC Cabinet to hold their meeting in centre at a future date. Make sure that the new councillors are up to speed on Sedbergh matters as they start to write their new manifesto.

Please note that the next meeting is on the 29 July not 22nd. Thank you to this school for hosting the meeting.

**Next meeting**      11am, Fri 29 July at the Hirst Centre, Sedbergh.