

Sedbergh Economic Partnership – Meeting Notes

11am, 21 October 2022

Attending: Andrew Cobb (Chair), Ian McPherson, Joanne Golton, Peter Marshall, Peter Stockton, Tony Reed-Screen, Debbie Richardson, Cllr Hazel Hodgson, Cllr Kevin Lancaster, Janey Hassam, Gillian Holmes, Libby Bateman, Debbie Wilson, Tony Roberts, Douglas Thomson. **Guests:** Claire McCarty and Adam Perry (Baliol).

Apologies: Cllr Suzie Pye, John Barraclough, Carol Moffat, James Ratcliffe, Sam Butcher, Matt Williams, Chris Woods, Sarah Campbell, Cllr Nick Cotton, Cllr Robin Ashcroft.

1. Welcome and Actions

- Andy welcomed everyone to the meeting.
- Shared Prosperity Fund - Round 1 application call now closed. Bids were considered by various organisations in Sedbergh but considered not a viable proposition given the levels of funding and number of recipients. SPF Round 2 expected in the new year.
- Christmas Late Night Opening - organisation underway and letters distributed to traders.
- Parking - SPC will meet again with PM / JG to consider new options for parking on 31 Oct.
- Employment land – YDNP confirmed existing allocations are in place for land immediately adjacent to the current units. Land to the west could also be considered, as owner is interested. This would provide an opportunity for SEP, with the support of SLDC, to submit the proposed land to YDNP to prevent it being allocated for housing. YDNP existing policy supports development of small build employment sites on boundaries so may not need allocating.
- Strategic Partnership Board – PM still to apply. Cllr Hodgson provided update on discussions with new Shadow Authority on business partnerships and how they are recognised with the new council. **ACTION: GH** to clarify with Karen Johnson at CCC.
- Slovenia Ambassador visit – the deputy ambassador visited on 17th October. The day went well, a good showcase for Sedbergh. There was a follow up call yesterday to re-establish the link and confirm a visit to Slovenia in May 2023, large delegation encouraged. Discussion on employment opportunities, need to fill vacancies and apprenticeships – Sedbergh School progressing visa requirements etc. **ACTION: JG** to compile list of vacancies across Sedbergh.
- The Rawthey Project was referenced, this is a rehabilitation programmes for ex-service personnel. LB reported that the CLA are looking at labour supply work with veterans and ex-offenders.

2. Baliol development

Thanks to Baliol representatives for attending the meeting. It is a strategic site for development and in an important location. A planning application has been lodged and is going through the process, it may need to be amended. The Yorkshire Dales National Park is confident that a good scheme will be reached.

There is 700m² employment space in a residential setting with a proposed nursery, small units, flexible units and potential hub provision. There is open market housing, affordable homes, local occupation clauses but all will be principal housing, in line with proposed YDNP policy. There is a mixture of old and new development. The site encourages a mixture of age ranges with family homes, small apartments and accessible living.

SEP members raised questions on delivery dates, numbers for viability, extra care facility, interest in employment units. All agreed that compromise for the site was needed and that the perfect plan just wasn't realistic and deliverable in the current market. All agreed that Baliol was important to Sedbergh and would like to see the site developed.

Discussion around extra care facility but key issues of demand and staffing were a barrier. The only way to help with employment is to build more houses. YDNP did contact the County Council about extra care but Sedbergh is not high on list of priorities due to numbers, staff, location. County Council estimated only nine persons in need, the Baliol project team suggested most viable models for construction now look at 45 to 50 units. Cllr Hodgson shared the prospect of new social care hubs, which are community organisations looking after care needs centrally and in homes rather than larger staff-heavy elderly care homes. **ACTION: HH** to provide more information.

3. Partners Updates

B4RN – Douglas Thomson provided an overview of phase 1 and 2 installation. Currently broadband is being installed around the edge of the town centre including across Sedbergh School land. Phase 1 dig to complete hopefully by Christmas. Plan for rest of town developed by Martin Stockdale and the scheme provides plenty of economic and social positives for Sedbergh. In time B4RN should be in the new Station Road development and at Baliol (separate meetings have been held). Main fibre stations are at Sedbergh School and at the Parish Council owned playing field. Special thanks paid by Douglas to Sedbergh School for their help and assistance.

CLEP - Concern flagged over Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership and how it fits in with the new unitary authorities. Cllr Hodgson reports that LEP set to continue for the next five years. Applications for govt grants, structural funds etc will still need to get LEP support. Reorganisation means that LEP may just keep the status quo for the time being. Need to flag any new priorities/ themes relevant to LEP and send to Hazel. **ACTION: JG** to request latest from the MP's office/ SLDC.

Reorganisation – SLDC not present. Reorganisation update emails are available together with newsletter. **ACTION: JG** to share details. Concern expressed about decision-making and priorities within the new organisation and channelling government funding. Money seems available for new roads structural improvements to deliver housing but not so much on maintenance such as nearby Rigmaden Bridge, which has been closed for many months. **ACTION: KL/ JG** to find out expected replacement bridge delivery timescale and assess any economic impact of closed bridge.

4. Projects Update

Nursery – the proposed Sedbergh based nursery is progressing. Sedbergh School has allocated the lodge opposite Spar as a temporary solution. Capacity is 22 children. The estate department is to consider refurbishment at approximately £25k, funded by the school. It is hoped that Mulberry Bush will operate it from 2023. Eventually it will move to larger premises at Baliol and grow in capacity. Need to get an idea of interest to reaffirm numbers, **ACTION: PM/ JG/ DW** to help with admin and collation of responses. With regards to staffing the school would run training for new staffs and apprenticeships. Note from Gill Holmes that CCC funding could be available.

Business portal – JG reported site content almost complete, Tony Roberts should hopefully publish first draft by the end of next week. **ACTION: All** to provide comment and input. Need to make sure that the information is concise and have a system where we can alert businesses to updates, such as need for consultation responses, road closures etc. 120 addresses have been compiled so far, more to come. **ACTION: JG** to write intro paragraph to go into Lookaround introducing SEP.

5. Planning Update

Local Plan – 90 maps to be published in January, these will include the biggest sites of 50 homes plus. Housing development boundaries will be published at the same time plus open space. All will be out for consultation. SEP may be asked to write and support. Plan will adapt if the rules are changed by government regarding planning laws.

Applications - Station Road development has started, some conditions still to discharge. Sedbergh School's tech centre is going to October planning committee for decision and it includes significant community use. The School were pleased to see the supportive input from SLDC and Tim Farron MP. The new centre has links with Lancaster University, Settlebeck, QES School and others.

Tollbar - this could be a key site for further employment use which could support local industry and jobs. The original Tollbar phase one was not completed but is highlighted in current local plan as an employment site. Tony Reed-Screen reported that phase two, to the west of existing site, has a willing landowner. Advised that should the wish be to protect it for employment rather than housing then SEP/ owner should submit it for land allocation, perhaps as a response to the publication of site maps. **ACTION: TRS/ JG** need to find the phase 1 owner to see if some employment land can be brought forward.

Station Road – JG provided an SLH update on the site and how to access it. Concern expressed that existing rentals in current SLH accommodation could not move into new SLH accommodation. Perhaps the MP could intervene in the rental issue. New housing at the site is meant to be serviced by both Broadacres and South Lakes Housing but confusion exists over who is taking forward applications. **ACTION: JG/ SPC** to pursue correct information on how locals should apply. **ACTION: JG** to provide SLH update note on how to apply for housing and share for wider distribution.

6. Any other business

- Browns is to go on the market for rent, number of interested parties already.
- £525,000 to be spent by Sedbergh School on LED lighting to reduce energy consumption.
- SEP members to consider a vision for the High Street at the next meeting, **ACTION: JG** will circulate discussion paper. Somebody maybe doing similar research following a Facebook question regarding what kind of shops were needed and the answer being takeaways.
- Gill Holmes reported that the Voluntary Car Scheme needs a Volunteer Coordinator for Sedbergh otherwise it will lose its scheme. **ACTION: All** to help push out the message.
- Cost of living grants are available from County Council and recently, the local farming community have been given £5k through the agriculture chaplaincy and farmer network to help distribute to those in need. For more information speak to Gill Holmes.

Next meeting 11am, Friday 25 November at the Hirst Centre, Sedbergh