

SPENNYMOOR TOWN CENTRE AREA ACTION PLAN BRIEF



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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Sedgefield Borough Council is seeking to appoint a suitably experienced and qualified consultancy team to undertake a comprehensive master planning exercise for the regeneration of Spennymoor town centre. Consultants will be required to undertake the master planning exercise as an Area Action Plan so that it can be adopted as part of the Borough Council's Local Development Framework.

1.2 With a population of nearly 19,000, Spennymoor is the second largest town in the Borough. There is a main shopping area offering a mix of traditional brick buildings, predominately along the High Street and a 1970's shopping precinct know as Festival Walk.

1.3 Changes in shopping habits including the rise of out of town shopping complexes such as the Metro Centre and Teesside Park, and the reduced purchasing power of local residents brought about by factory closures, have reduced the vitality and viability of the town centre. The town centre has been marred by a fall in footfall and customer spend and a rise in vacant units.

1.4 Sedgefield Borough Council has initiated an intervention programme, building on a study that was commissioned in 2000 and undertaken by EDAW. This was followed by the implementation of a Town Centre Management Initiative which ran until 2006.

1.5 Spennymoor has also benefited from over £1.5M of capital improvements to the public realm and introduction of art work. This was supported primarily through Single Programme funds delegated to the County Durham Economic Partnership by the Regional Development Agency.



1.6 2006 saw the completion of the £2m+ international gymnastics centre at Spennymoor Leisure Centre. This venue is on the list of facilities for the Northern Region 2012 Olympic training venues.

1.7 As one of the Borough's main towns Spennymoor has and will be experiencing significant housing growth following planning approvals for sites at Whitworth Park, Watson Court, Thorn Lighting, Merrington Lane and the former Greyhound Stadium (subject to the agreement of a Section 106). There have also been greenfield housing developments on land north of Grayson Road.

1.8 In spite of the public realm improvements, an evaluation of the recent improvement programme still showed concern for the lack of variety and quality of shops. There is a risk that this could contribute to further decline, particularly when there are several accessible major retail centres which are able to offer multi-sections of comparative goods.

1.9 There is no significant night time economy and no 'family friendly' public houses. There are no restaurants in Spennymoor and only one night club.

1.10 In view of Spennymoor's size, position and function the Borough Council would like to actively facilitate the diversification of land use including urban housing development in the town centre, both in identifying appropriate sites and by taking the initiative in reusing and converting derelict or underused buildings.

1.11 Sedgefield Borough Council recognises that the redevelopment of the town centre is a high priority for its residents and, as such, has committed capital resources to invest in this.

1.12 The brief is presented under the following sections:

2.0 Purpose of the masterplan

3.0 Study area and development opportunities

- 4.0 Methodology
- 5.0 Roles and responsibilities
- 6.0 Tender requirements
- 7.0 Budgets
- 8.0 Selection process and timescales

2.0 Purpose of the Spennymoor Town Centre Area Action Plan

2.1 Our aspirations for Spennymoor, through an Area Action Plan, is to create a vibrant and progressive town centre, positioned to provide the facilities and services demanded by the growing population and capable of being sustained in the face of competition from surrounding centres. These issues are detailed further in paragraph 3.4 to 3.7.

2.2 The purpose of this Area Action Plan is to provide a comprehensive regeneration framework that challenges current use, target change and inspire action to guide future investment and activity in the town centre.

2.3 The Area Action Plan should:

- Provide a comprehensive development strategy for the area;
- Contain a comprehensive planning policy framework and where applicable propose amendments to the town centre boundary;
- Identify key sites with opportunities for development;
- Identify areas of the physical offer that can be reconfigured to maximise investor appeal;
- Identify practical opportunities to develop/re-develop the centre to best serve its current and future needs;
- Identify opportunities for increased employment within the town centre
- Include opportunities for promoting environmentally sustainable development and embedded renewable energy use;
- Provide practical initiatives and proposals for implementation;
- To identify improvements to vehicle and pedestrian movement in and around the town centre;

- Identify improvements to linkages between the town centre and existing/emerging residential developments;
- Provide a specific purpose to attracting/diversifying retail in the town centre; and
- Provide a comprehensive marketing proposal to promote the opportunities identified.

3.0 Study Area & Development Opportunities

3.1 Figure 1 at the rear of this brief shows the designated town centre as allocated in the Local Plan and a secondary area that we believe influences the core area of interest.

3.2 However, if the study area needs to be expanded further, this will be encouraged where those areas are considered to have a regenerative benefit on the centre as a whole.

3.3 Consideration must be given to any proposed retail and housing developments at edge of centre locations and recommend how the Borough Council can utilise these to our advantage.

Development Opportunities

3.4 A Place to Live

An early focus of consideration should be to explore the relationship between the town centre and the recent and future housing developments. The Study should also examine the feasibility and sustainability of promoting increased living within the immediate town centre.

3.5 Retail Diversification

A strong focus of the study should be around retail in terms of redevelopment of areas, infill development sites, and diversification for the long term use of retail premises.

3.6 Non Retail Business Space

In line with the emerging Regional Spatial Strategy for the North East, consideration should be given to identifying opportunities to increase or improve non retail business space within the town centre to support its vitality and viability.

3.7 Leisure and Cultural Opportunities

A focus of consideration is expected to identify how best to enhance and develop the town's leisure and culture opportunities whilst maximising those that currently exist. It should also identify opportunities for introducing family based leisure to create a stronger evening economy.

4.0 Methodology

4.1 The methodology employed to produce the Area Action Plan will adhere to the requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004.

Phase 1 – mobilisation

4.2 An initial meeting with the client will be required to clarify the scope of work, the timescales, consultees and frequency of contract management meetings. The client will supply electronic copies of documentation and identify key contacts.

Phase 2 – desktop assessment

4.3 A considerable amount of baseline work has already been undertaken over recent years. It is envisaged information provided within these documents will form a major part of this area of work.

Documents to consider are:

- Spennymoor & Newton Aycliffe Town Centre Study, September 2000, EDAW
- Spennymoor Town Centre Improvement Evaluation Final Report, ERS
- Baseline Information for Major Centres, May 2004, County Durham Economic Partnership
- Baseline Information for Major Centres – Update, September 2006, County Durham Economic Partnership
- Town Centre Retail Gap Study, May 2007, Sedgefield Borough Council
- Annual Centres Survey, SBC Planning (identifies town centre land use)
- Housing Led Town Centre Growth – Disposable Income Study, County Durham Economic Partnership
- The Future Role of Town Centres in the Borough of Sedgefield – May 2007, University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Student Consultancy Project

4.4 Policy documents that need to be considered as part of the study are:

- Sedgefield Borough Council Corporate Plan (2007/2008)
- Sedgefield Borough Council Local Development Framework
- Sedgefield Borough Council Community Strategy (2004-2014)
- Sedgefield Borough Council Community Strategy Action Plan (2007/2008)
- Sedgefield Borough Council Economic Strategy (2007)
- Sedgefield Borough Council Open Space Needs Assessment (2007)
- County Durham Economic Strategy
- Regional Spatial Strategy
- Regional Economic Strategy
- Regional Housing Strategy
- Planning Policy Statement 6: Planning for Town Centres
- Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Development Frameworks
- The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) England Regulations 2004

All identified documents will be supplied in electronic format where possible.

Phase 4 – Alternative Options

4.5 The outcome of this Area Action Plan is to identify and prioritise an improvement programme. Therefore the Borough Council does not want the options to include a 'do-nothing' scenario.

4.6 A range of options for the town centre will need to be developed. The options should focus on a range of housing, environmental, economic, retail, transport and community initiatives.

4.7 The options should be presented to the Borough Council in a clear and concise format and the policy justification for the proposals. These options should be presented in an Issues and Options Report which will be accompanied by a Sustainability Appraisal (including the requirements for Strategic Environment Assessment) Scoping Report.

4.8 The options should include clear definitions of proposals and projects, funding sources, outputs and outcomes, phasing, project management as well as considering the risk elements

4.9 The statutory consultation requirement for the Issues and Options Report and SA Scoping Report will be undertaken by the Borough Council.

Phase 5 - Production of the Preferred Options Document

4.10 This stage will involve the production of the Preferred Options document based on the consultation carried out under 4.9 and the Sustainability Appraisal and Appropriate Assessment.

4.11 The preferred options document should contain detailed strategies for delivering the aspirations of the study. It should also contain the design principles for the town centre as a whole providing key coordinating design principles that need to be pursued alongside the environmental and development projects.

4.12 Consultants will be expected to present their findings to a meeting of Members and Senior Officers. The statutory public consultation requirement for the Preferred Options, Sustainability Appraisal and Appropriate Assessment will be undertaken by the Borough Council.

Phase 6 – Production of the Submission Draft Document

4.13 This stage will involve producing the Submission Draft version of the Area Action Plan ensuring that it meets the tests of soundness as set out in Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Development Frameworks. The Submission Draft must be sound so that the Borough Council can formerly submit the Area Action Plan to the Secretary of State for Examination.

Phase 7 – Reporting

4.14 The consultants will need to report to the client set out The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 for producing an Area Action Plan.

4.15 The client will need to adhere to the reporting requirements set out for producing a Local Area Agreement document.

4.16 The consultants will supply four hard copies and two electronic copies of the final report which will be unrestricted in their further use.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Sedgefield Borough Council

5.1 The client for the study is Sedgefield Borough Council, Strategy and Regeneration Division.

5.2 The lead officer for the work will be Graham Wood, Corporate Policy and Regeneration Manager. The lead officer will provide details of other appropriate contacts as necessary. The lead officer will also ensure that copies of existing documents and information is made available.

5.3 A small steering group of officers will advise and oversee the study. The group will comprise of Regeneration, Planning and Housing Policy Officers.

Consultant

5.4 The consultant will be responsible for undertaking the work outlined in the brief and as agreed on appointment.

5.5 The consultant will be responsible for all administration associated with the study and this should be included in the tender price.

5.6 Any assistance the consultants may require, from Sedgefield Borough Council, over and above that specified in this brief, should be stated in the submission.

5.7 The consultants will be required to provide an implementation plan that will include:

- Project summary sheets to include an outline of the project, indicative costs, risks, funding arrangements, lead organisation and timescales;
- An overarching phasing plan;
- Analysis of likely external funding support from public and private sectors;
- Advice on marketing and promoting the identified opportunities; and
- A monitoring framework for the Area Action Plan.

6. Tender Requirements

6.1 Tenders should include:

- An understanding of the key issues;
- Overall methodology proposed;
- A statement of related experience;
- Details of the experience of the staff to be engaged in the contract and alongside a breakdown of the time envisaged to be spent on the project by each member of the consultancy team;
- A list of two referees including details of recently completed commissions;
- The proposed work programme and timescale for completing the commission, including key review points; and
- Full cost breakdown (excluding VAT) for the commission with a forecast cost including the estimated number of consultancy hours / days, for each stage of the commission – separately detailing likely expenditure

6.2 Should you be successful, these documents and any subsequent correspondence between you and the Council will form part of a binding contract between you and the Council.

7. Budget

7.1 Sedgefield Borough Council is fully funding this commission.

8. Selection Process and Timescales

8.1 Timescales

Closing date for tenders	26 th October 2007
Short listing	w/c 29 th October 2007
Interview by steering group	w/c 19 th November
Appointment of consultants	30 th November 2007
Inception meeting	w/c 3 rd December 2007

Scheduled contract management meetings	To be agreed at inception meeting
Initial consultation on Issues and Options and SA Scoping Report	June 2008
Consultation on Preferred Options and SA Report and AA Screening Report	January 2009
Submission of AAP to SOS for Examination	July 2009
Examination	February 2010
Adoption	September 2010

8.2 Tenders will be selected on the following criteria:

35%	Understanding of the requirements of the project brief including delivery and proposed methodology
25%	Track record of the tenderer and its staff in delivering similar projects and capacity allocated to this submission.
40%	Cost and value for money

8.3 Any queries should be directed in the first instance to Graham Wood, Corporate Policy and Regeneration Manager, on 01388 816166 ext 4205 or gwood@sedgefield.gov.uk

