

# CABINET

Thursday, 25 September 2008

10.00 a.m.

Conference Room 1,  
Council Offices,  
Spennymoor

# AGENDA and REPORTS



**This document is also available in other languages, large print and audio format upon request**

**العربية (Arabic)**

إذا أردت المعلومات بلغة أخرى أو بطريقة أخرى، نرجو أن تطلب ذلك منا.

**বাংলা (Bengali)**

যদি আপনি এই ডকুমেন্ট অন্য ভাষায় বা ফরমেটে চান, তাহলে দয়া করে আমাদেরকে বলুন।

**(中文 (繁體字)) (Cantonese)**

如欲索取以另一語文印製或另一格式製作的資料，請與我們聯絡。

**हिन्दी (Hindi)**

यदि आपको सूचना किसी अन्य भाषा या अन्य रूप में चाहिये तो कृपया हमसे कहे

**polski (Polish)**

Jeżeli chcieliby Państwo uzyskać informacje w innym języku lub w innym formacie, prosimy dać nam znać.

**ਪੰਜਾਬੀ (Punjabi)**

ਜੇ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ, ਤਾਂ ਇਹ ਸਾਥੋਂ ਮੰਗ ਲਓ।

**Español (Spanish)**

Póngase en contacto con nosotros si desea recibir información en otro idioma o formato.

**اردو (Urdu)**

اگر آپ کو معلومات کسی دیگر زبان یا دیگر شکل میں درکار ہوں تو برائے مہربانی ہم سے پوچھیے۔

## AGENDA

**1. APOLOGIES**

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

To notify the Chairman of any items that appear in the agenda in which you may have an interest.

**3. MINUTES**

To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2008. (Pages 1 - 2)

### KEY DECISION

#### PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT PORTFOLIO

**4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ON THE PREPARATION OF THE SPENNYMOOR TOWN CENTRE AREA ACTION PLAN**

Report of the Director of Neighbourhood Services. (Pages 3 - 90)

### MINUTES

**5. STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2008. (Pages 91 - 92)

**6. AREA 1 FORUM**

Minutes of the meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2008. (Pages 93 - 98)

**N.B. Whilst the following item does not contain any 'exempt' information, it should be noted that if Members wish to raise any questions, it may be necessary to pass the appropriate resolution to exclude the press and public as any queries may involve the disclosure of 'exempt' information.**

**7. EMPLOYMENT ISSUES PANEL**

Minutes of the meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2008. (Pages 99 - 100)

### EXEMPT INFORMATION

The following item is not for publication by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12 A of the Local Government Act 1972. As such it is envisaged that an appropriate resolution will be passed at the meeting to exclude the press and public.

### OTHER DECISION

#### STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP PORTFOLIO

**8. ASSET MANAGEMENT - TRANSFER OF LAND ASSETS TO TOWN AND PARISH COUNCILS**

Report of Director of Resources. (Pages 101 - 126)

**9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Lead Members are requested to inform the Chief Executive or the Cabinet Secretary of any items they might wish to raise under this heading by no later than 12 noon on the day preceding the meeting. This will enable the Officers in consultation with the Chairman to determine whether consideration of the matter by the Cabinet is appropriate.

B. Allen  
Chief Executive

Council Offices  
SPENNYMOOR  
17th September 2008

Councillor Mrs. A.M. Armstrong (Chairman)

Councillors Mrs. K. Conroy, V. Crosby, Mrs. B. Graham, A. Hodgson, Mrs. L. Hovvels, J.M. Khan, D.A. Newell and W. Waters

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ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Any person wishing to exercise the right of inspection in relation to this Agenda and associated papers should contact Gillian Garrigan, on Spennymoor 816166 Ext 4240 [ggarrigan@sedgefield.gov.uk](mailto:ggarrigan@sedgefield.gov.uk)

# Item 3

## SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL CABINET

Conference Room 1,  
Council Offices,  
Spennymoor

Thursday,  
11 September 2008

Time: 10.00 a.m.

**Present:** Councillor Mrs. A.M. Armstrong (Chairman) and  
Councillors Mrs. K. Conroy, Mrs. B. Graham, A. Hodgson, J.M. Khan,  
D.A. Newell and W. Waters

**In Attendance:** Councillors W.M. Blenkinsopp, Mrs. P. Crathorne,  
Mrs. L. M.G. Cuthbertson, G.C. Gray, B. Haigh, Mrs. S. Haigh, T. Hogan,  
B. Lamb, A. Warburton and T. Ward

**Apologies:** Councillors V. Crosby and Mrs. L. Hovvels

**CAB.31/08 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**  
Members had no interests to declare.

**CAB.32/08 MINUTES**  
The Minutes of the meeting held on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2008 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**CAB.33/08 GROWTH POINT (KEY DECISION)**  
Consideration was given to a report detailing the progress made in relation to the Durham New Growth Point Bid. (For copy see file of Minutes).

It was explained that the Durham New Growth Point Bid, which was linked to the Coalfield Housing Market Renewal Programme and the recognised priority areas, aimed to create 14,500 net additional homes before 2016 in the districts of Easington, Sedgefield and Wear Valley. The bid focused on following two growth corridors:

- The A19 corridor encompassing the towns of Peterlee and Seaham.
- The Bishop Auckland to Darlington corridor, encompassing the towns of Bishop Auckland, Newton Aycliffe, Shildon and Spennymoor including Chilton and Ferryhill.

The new housing would be linked to town centre regeneration and new job creation via the accelerated development of nine employment and mixed use development sites, including Durham Gate, Spennymoor. The programme would improve the environmental, economic and social sustainability of the above settlements. It would also link with the ongoing materplanning exercises in Spennymoor, Newton Aycliffe, Peterlee and

Bishop Auckland town centres and would lead to transport, healthcare and education improvements in the two corridors.

Members noted that in July 2008 the Department for Communities and Local Government had announced that the Durham Bid was one of the twenty successful second round bids eligible to share £100m through the Growth Fund.

Members' attention was drawn to Section 4 of the report which outlined the next steps to be taken.

- RESOLVED :*
- 1. That the content of the report be noted.*
  - 2. That in the light of the timescales prescribed by the Department of Communities and Local Government, authority be delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Lead Members for Planning and Development and Social Regeneration and Partnership, to approve the submissions of the Community Infrastructure Pro-Forma and the Programme of Delivery as identified in Section 4 of the report.*

**CAB.34/08 AREA 5 FORUM**

Consideration was given to the Minutes of the meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2008. (For copy see file of Minutes).

*RESOLVED :* *That the Minutes be received.*

**Published on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2008.**

**Any key decision contained in these Minutes will be implemented on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2008 unless they are called in by three Members of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee in accordance with the call in procedure rules.**

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**ACCESS TO INFORMATION**

Any person wishing to exercise the right of inspection, etc., in relation to these Minutes and associated papers should contact Gillian Garrigan, on Spennymoor 816166 Ext 4240 [ggarrigan@sedgefield.gov.uk](mailto:ggarrigan@sedgefield.gov.uk)

# Item 4

**KEY DECISION**

**REPORT TO CABINET**

**25 September 2008**

## **REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES**

### **Portfolio: Planning & Development**

#### **Public Participation on the preparation of the Spennymoor Town Centre Area Action Plan**

#### **1 SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and its associated Regulations govern the delivery of the Local Development Framework process. The Regulations are currently being revised. Both Regulation 25 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 and Regulation 25 of the draft Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2008 states that in order to take forward this document, the Borough Council must undertake early consultation and public participation with its community. The publication of this document will be the first step to meet requirements of Regulation 25 on Public Participation.
- 1.2 DTZ has been commissioned by Sedgefield Borough Council to assist in the preparation of an Area Action Plan for Spennymoor Town Centre. The aim of the Area Action Plan is to create a robust planning policy framework, which will facilitate the creation of a vibrant and progressive town centre positioned to provide the facilities and services demanded by Spennymoor's growing population.
- 1.3 During the six-week period of formal public participation, there will be a series of events where the local community can come forward with their views. The methods of consultation will be aligned with those outlined in the Statement of Community Involvement.
- 1.4 This Public Participation Report considers the key issues facing and a series of options on how these can be addressed. There will need to be further community engagement before the Council can submit the Area Action Plan to the Secretary of State. Copies of the Public Participation Report and Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report have been placed in the Members Rooms.

#### **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 That Cabinet commend the attached Spennymoor Town Centre Area Action Plan Public Participation Report to Council. The document will require Council authorisation to be published.

### 3 SPENNYMOOR TOWN CENTRE AREA ACTION PLAN

#### Background

- 3.1 Improving the physical environment and economic success of the town is one of the Council's key priorities, as indicated in the Council's Core Strategy Preferred Options Document (June 2007), which has the following aims:
1. To enhance social inclusion and well being;
  2. To improve the quality of where people live;
  3. To reduce the impact of development on climate change;
  4. To protect and enhance natural resources; and,
  5. To encourage and support a competitive and diverse economy.
- 3.2 In addition to this, the Regional Spatial Strategy (adopted July 2008) identifies Spennymoor as a regeneration town in the Durham Coalfield Regeneration area and therefore it is important that the function and vitality of Spennymoor is supported so that it can meet the local shopping, recreational and community need. Spennymoor has a particular role to play as a main focal point for readily accessible local employment opportunities, services and facilities for its residents and those in the surrounding areas.
- 3.3 The production of the Area Action Plan is a crucial step in achieving this, as it provides the statutory planning document to underpin the main developments the Council wishes to bring forward to regenerate Spennymoor Town Centre. The Area Action Plan will look at amongst other things:
- A vision of how Spennymoor Town Centre should evolve;
  - The scale and location of new shopping facilities;
  - Managing the town centre to enable the full range of shopping facilities to be provided;
  - The level and location of employment uses such as offices in the town centre;
  - The level and location of housing in the town centre;
  - Improving transportation to and around the town centre; and,
  - Enhancing and protecting the environmental design quality of the town centre.
- 3.4 As part of the production of the Area Action Plan, DTZ held a specific workshop with key stakeholders in July 2008. DTZ used the event to ask what their aspirations for the future of the town centre were and to discuss initial ideas for the Area Action Plan. These discussions fed into the refinement of the draft Options, which are presented within this document.
- 3.5 The document has identified three principal areas where physical change could take place within the town centre. These are:
- Festival Walk shopping centre and environs;
  - Former Gas Works site; and,
  - Cheapside.
- 3.6 All of these areas are considered to offer significant development potential which could underpin the regeneration of the town centre. Festival Walk is currently in poor condition with a number of voids and is in need of renewal. The former Gas Works

site is a vacant site that occupies an important position at the gateway to the town from the A688 and offers the opportunity to improve the linkages between this and the town centre. The Cheapside site is currently occupied by a number of public service buildings that are all in a poor condition and in low-density surroundings, yet occupying a central position in the town centre.

- 3.7 For each site, the document identifies possible ways of redevelopment. For Festival Walk it is envisaged that this could take the form of a shopping centre; a food store; or residential led redevelopment. The Former Gas Works site could be redeveloped with either employment, residential or retail/leisure as the main driver. For the Cheapside area, options considered were the development of either a Civic Quarter or a mixed-use led scheme.

### Strategic Environmental Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal

- 3.8 The Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report has been prepared alongside this Public Participation document. The Scoping Report has been prepared in accordance with the guidance contained in the ODPM document 'Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Documents' (2005). The Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report has been prepared using the same format as the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report for the Core Strategy. In line with Government guidance, the purpose of this Sustainability Appraisal Scoping report is to:

- identify environmental, social and economic objectives identified in other Plans, Policies and Programmes that are relevant to the Spennymoor Town Centre Area Action Plan;
- to assess the environmental, social and economic characteristics of the Spennymoor Area;
- to ensure that, as far as possible, the Spennymoor Town Centre Area Action Plan achieves the objectives of sustainable development; and,
- to set out a framework for carrying out the remainder of the sustainability appraisal.

### Appropriate Assessment

- 3.9 Following this initial participatory period, the options for the Town Centre Area Action Plan will be considered and worked up to form part of a second stage of community engagement. As part of this process, an Appropriate Assessment screening process will be undertaken. This is required for any proposed plan or project which may have a significant effect on one or more European sites, including Special Protection Areas (SPAs) for birds and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), and which is not required for the management of those sites. Schedule 1 of the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c) (Amendment) (England and Wales) Regulations 2006 transposes into English Law the requirement to carry out a screening process for Appropriate Assessment of Local Development Documents, such as the Area Action Plan.

### Next Steps

- 3.10 The publication of this document starts the Council's process to meet the requirements of Regulation 25 of the Draft Regulations. Following consultation of the various options and analysis of the consultation responses, each option will be

subjected to sustainability appraisal to help determine which has the most beneficial social, economic and environmental impacts. A further round of engagement will be necessary to provide the community with a preferred list of options for the Town Centre. This is programmed for January 2009.

#### **4 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 Funding is from the government's Local Authority Growth Initiative (LABGI) Enabling Capital Investment. Cabinet considered a framework for the use of this funding on 13th September 2007.
- 4.2 Officer time has been considered and scope has been identified within the Forward Plans and Regeneration Teams. The document will need to be publicised in the local press and a number of documents to be printed. This cost will be met from the Local Development Framework budget.

#### **5 CONSULTATIONS**

- 5.1 All consultation will be undertaken, in accordance with the statutory consultation procedures as prescribed by The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 and the draft Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2008. Further details can be found in the Borough Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement (June 2006).
- 5.2 Consultation on this Document will take place for a period of 6 weeks commencing on 6th October 2008.

#### **6 OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

##### 6.1 Links to Corporate Objectives / Values

The Area Action Plan will provide a framework for action, which will support the Corporate/Transitional Plan's Aim of improving business and employment opportunities and a number of Community Strategy Aims.

##### 6.2 Legal Implications

The document must be published in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 and the draft The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2008.

##### 6.3 Risk Management

If the Area Action Plan is not produced, it will stifle the planned regeneration of the town centre and could lead to inappropriate development within it.

##### 6.4 Health and Safety

No additional implications have been identified.

## 6.5 Sustainability

Sustainability Appraisal is covered in the main body of the report.

## 6.6 Equality and Diversity

The Report will carry the Council language panel and be available on request in accordance. It will also be placed on the Council's website in pdf format.

## 6.7 Social Inclusion

Social inclusion issues are discussed with the Document.

## 6.8 Procurement

There are no procurement issues.

## 7 **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 None.

## 8 **LIST OF APPENDICES**

Spennymoor Town Centre Area Action Plan – Issues and Options Report  
Spennymoor Town Centre Area Action Plan – Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report

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**E-mail address** [gwood@sedgefield.gov.uk](mailto:gwood@sedgefield.gov.uk) & [cmyers@sedgefield.gov.uk](mailto:cmyers@sedgefield.gov.uk)

**Wards:** Spennymoor  
Low Spennymoor & Tudhoe Grange  
Middlestone  
Tudhoe

**Key Decision Validation:** This is a Key Decision as a decision made by Cabinet in the course of developing proposals to Council to amend the **policy framework**.

### **Background Papers:**

Cabinet Report, 13 September 2007: Utilising Local authority Business Growth Initiative Fund, Report to Cabinet

Cabinet Report, 27 September 2007: Commissioning of an Area Action Plan for Spennymoor Town Centre

Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Spatial Planning

Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004

Draft Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2008

Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Documents, 2005

## Examination by Statutory Officers

	Yes	Not Applicable
1. The report has been examined by the Councils Head of the Paid Service or his representative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. The content has been examined by the Councils S.151 Officer or his representative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. The content has been examined by the Council's Monitoring Officer or his representative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. The report has been approved by Management Team	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



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# Spennymoor Area Action Plan

## Public Participation (Issues and Options)

August 2008



**This document is also available in large print and audio format.  
It may also be available in other languages.**

#### Arabic

يتوفر هذا المستند أيضا بطباعة مكبرة وكتسجيل صوتي. كما يمكن توفيره بلغات أخرى.

#### Bengali

এই দলিলটি বড় হরফে এবং অডিও ফরম্যাটেও পাওয়া যায়। এটি অন্যান্য ভাষাতেও পাওয়া যায়।

#### Cantonese

本文件設有大大字印刷和音頻格式兩種版本，或有其他語言可供選擇。

#### Hindi

यह दस्तावेज बड़े फ़ॉन्ट और ऑडियो में भी उपलब्ध है। यह दूसरी भाषाओं में भी उपलब्ध हो सकता है।

#### Polish

Dokument jest również dostępny w formacie dużego druku i nagranie audio oraz w innych językach.

#### Punjabi

ਇਹ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਵੱਡੇ ਛਾਪੇ ਅਤੇ ਆਡੀਓ ਫਾਰਮੈਟ ਵਿੱਚ ਵੀ ਉਪਲਬਧ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਵੀ ਉਪਲਬਧ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ।

#### Spanish

Este documento también está disponible en letras grandes y en formato de audio. Además, puede suministrarse en otros idiomas.

#### Urdu

یہ دستاویز بڑے حروف اور آڈیو کی شکل میں بھی دستیاب ہے۔ یہ دوسری زبانوں میں بھی دستیاب کر لیا جاسکتا ہے۔



## Forward

To be inserted by SBC

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## 1.0 Introduction

### 1.1 Background and Objectives

An Area Action Plan (AAP) is a type of Development Plan Document that forms part of the statutory planning framework – the Local Development Framework (LDF) – for the local area. It provides a means of guiding the pattern of development within a specific area of change. The Government's Planning Policy Statement relating to local plan making (PPS 12 Creating Strong Safe and Prosperous Communities through Local Spatial Planning – published in June 2008), states that AAPs should be used to:

- Deliver planned growth areas;
- Stimulate regeneration;
- Protect areas particularly sensitive to change;
- Resolve conflicting objectives in areas subject to development pressures; or
- Focus the delivery of area based regeneration initiatives.

The Area Action Plan for Spennymoor town centre will help deliver Sedgefield Borough Council's regeneration objectives for the centre. The AAP will provide a comprehensive regeneration framework that challenges current use, targets change and inspires action to guide future investment and activity.

The Area Action Plan will:

- 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 where the physical offer that can be reconfigured to maximise investor appeal;
- Identify practical opportunities to develop/redevelop the centre to best serve its current and future needs;
- Create 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;
- 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 to prospective delivery partners.

## 1.2 Spatial Planning Context

The Area Action Plan will form part of a Durham-wide Local Development Framework, which, when adopted, will replace the saved policies of the Sedgefield Borough Local Plan (1996). The Sedgefield Borough Local Plan is being replaced by a County-wide LDF because of the Local Government Reorganisation that will result in a new county-wide Unitary Local Planning Authority in April 2009.

The saved policies of the existing Sedgefield Borough Local Plan provide – for the time being – the existing statutory policy basis for guiding development in the town centre, the most relevant policies of which are:

- Policy S1, which promotes and protects Spennymoor as a District Shopping Centre;
- Policy S2, which indicates the types of land uses that will be permitted and those that will not in the town centre; and
- Policy S3, which ensures that new development proposals meet Borough transport policies relating to highways and parking.

The need for an Area Action Plan for Spennymoor town centre was initially identified in Sedgefield Borough Council's Core Strategy Preferred Options Document (June 2007). Although this document will eventually be superseded by a County-wide Core Strategy, it remains an important document in setting the policy context for the Area Action Plan. The aims of the Core Strategy Preferred Options Document are as follows:

1. To enhance social inclusion and well being
2. To improve the quality of where people live
3. To reduce the impact of development on climate change
4. To protect and enhance natural resources
5. To encourage and support a competitive and diverse economy.

The Area Action Plan will play a key role in driving forward these aims in a spatial context. Further details of the Core Strategy Preferred Options document is provided in Chapter 2.

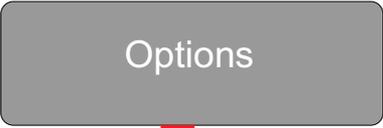
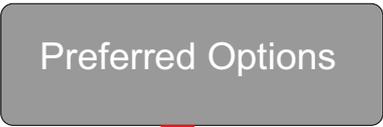
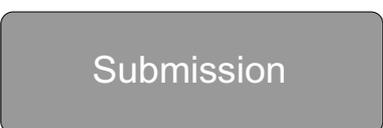
### 1.3 AAP Preparation Process

The timetable for the production of the Area Action Plan is set out in Sedgefield Borough Council's Local Development Scheme and is as follows:

<b>Milestones</b>	<b>Dates</b>
Informal consultation and evidence gathering (leading to release of Issues and Options Paper)	Up to September 2008
Issues and Options Consultation	October – November 2008
Development of Preferred Option	December 2008
Preferred Options Consultation	January – February 2009
Submission of DPD to Secretary of State and DPD Consultation	July 2009
Examination	February 2010
Estimated Date For Adoption	September 2010

The Local Government Reorganisation that is currently taking place in County Durham has affected the timescale for adoption of the AAP. Under the new arrangements, which include the dissolution of Sedgefield Borough Council and establishment of a new county wide Unitary Authority (April 2009), the new Authority will be responsible for the document's adoption. Therefore, there is currently some uncertainty as to the precise timing of the adoption process.

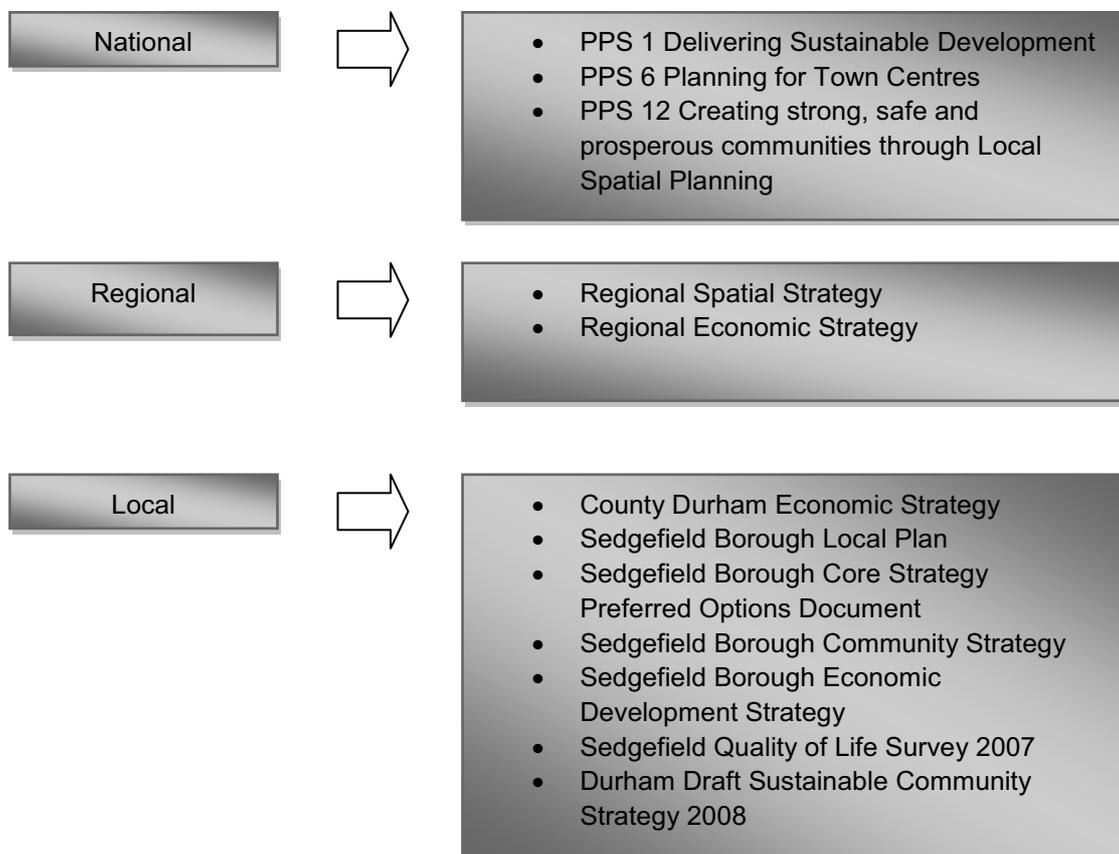
The table on the following page provides a summary of the steps that will be taken as part of the AAP preparation process.

	<p>A baseline assessment was carried out to provide an evidence base to support the development of the Area Action Plan. The Assessment examined a range of social, economic and environmental factors affecting the town centre.</p>
	<p>The purpose of this document is to set out the proposed issues and options, vision and objectives for the town centre. It should act as a tool for consultation and provide the opportunity for the public and stakeholders to express their views on the issues and options facing the area.</p>
	<p>An appraisal of the options will then be undertaken to demonstrate how each option will fulfil the plan's objectives.</p>
	<p>A preferred options document will be produced in order to refine and finalise the options. This paper will reflect the issues and recommendations raised through the initial stakeholder consultation. The paper will then be subject to a formal consultation period in light of the arising options.</p>
	<p>A development document will then be prepared and submitted for examination into the soundness of the plan.</p>
	<p>Following the Secretary of State's examination of the plan, it will be adopted by Durham Unitary Authority.</p>

## 2.0 Policy Context

### 2.1 Overview

Spennymoor Town Centre Area Action Plan will form part of the proposed Local Development Framework for the new Unitary Authority. However, it also sits within the context of several important policy documents at national, regional and local levels:



### 2.2 National

Each of the Government's Planning Policy Statements is relevant in setting the context and guiding the development of policy in the Area Action Plan. The most relevant documents are PPS1 (Delivering Sustainable Development), PPS6 (Planning for Town Centres), and PPS12 (Local Spatial Planning).

### **Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development (2006)**

PPS1 sets out the Government's overarching planning policies on the delivery of sustainable development through the planning system. It puts the delivery of sustainable development at the heart of the planning system, and also sets out objectives for achieving a transparent, flexible, predictable, efficient and effective planning system. It defines the system as being plan-led, with planning applications being determined in line with an adopted development plan, and also sets out its objectives for a spatial approach to be addressed in the preparation of development plans.

The key implications for Spennymoor Area Action Plan are:

- The need to reinforce the role and viability of Spennymoor town centre through concentrating retail, office and leisure uses there;
- The importance of the AAP acting as a mechanism for delivering the spatial implications of the Borough's Community Strategy, and responding to the needs of the area and community;
- The need for the AAP to provide a robust basis for determining planning applications;
- The AAP must contribute to addressing global sustainability by tackling the causes and impacts of climate change;
- The policies of the AAP must promote high quality design;
- The AAP should seek to create a sustainable pattern of development which minimises the need for travel.

### **Planning Policy Statement 6: Town Centres (2005)**

Planning Policy Statement 6 (PPS 6) Town Centres states that new development (of retailing and other defined uses) should be focused in existing centres. In terms of the locational spread of future growth across existing centres, PPS 6 recognises that there may be a need to rebalance the network of centres to ensure that it is not overly dominated by the largest centres. The emphasis upon development and regeneration with medium and smaller sized centres has therefore increased.

The sequential approach in selecting sites for development also increases the emphasis on developing medium and smaller sized centres. Town centre and edge-of-centre sites are more likely to be used as the sequential approach makes clear that only if there are no town centre or edge-of-centre sites, can out-of-centre sites be considered.

PPS 6 stresses the importance of ensuring that a local network of centres exists and that the function of centres is appropriate to meet peoples' day - to - day needs. This includes identifying opportunity sites suitable for development or redevelopment, or where conversions or changes of use could be encouraged.

PPS6 is in the process of being updated and a new draft version of the document has been produced. The Draft reinforces the emphasis of prioritising development in town centres and proposes a new impact test as a requirement for new retail proposals to ensure that any negative effects are taken into consideration when assessing planning applications.

## **Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Spatial Planning (June 2008)**

PPS12 sets out the Government's policies for the creation of Local Development Frameworks. It emphasises the importance of 'spatial planning' which:

- Produces a vision for the future of places that responds to the local challenges and opportunities and is based on evidence, a sense of local distinctiveness and community derived objectives, within the overall framework of national policy and regional strategies;
- Translates the vision into a set of priorities, programmes, policies and land allocations together with the public sector resources required to deliver them;
- Creates a framework for private investment and regeneration that promotes economic, environmental and social wellbeing for the area;
- Coordinates and deliver the public sector components of this vision with other agencies and processes (e.g. LAAs);
- Creates a positive framework for action on climate change; and
- Contributes to the achievement of sustainable development.

It sets out the various documents that can form part of the Local Development Framework (including Area Action Plans) and provides guidance on the process for preparation including requirements for Sustainability Appraisal and Community Involvement. It also redefines the tests of soundness as being:

- Justified (i.e. founded on robust and credible evidence and the most appropriate strategy in relation to alternatives);
- Effective (deliverable, flexible and able to be monitored); and
- Consistent with national policy.

## **2.3 Regional Strategy**

### **North East Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS, July 2008)**

The Regional Spatial Strategy sets out the long term strategy for spatial development in the North East. The RSS states that the majority of new development should be within the main conurbations, such as Sunderland, Newcastle and Durham. The RSS acknowledges that delivering sustainable communities by retaining and stabilising population in sustainable locations requires a better mix of housing size, type and tenure within high quality living environments. Key challenges identified in the strategy include:

- Stemming and reversing population decline
- Tackling and regenerating low demand areas.
- Providing an inclusive range of housing

The RSS provides for 23,545 dwellings for the County Durham area between 2004 and 2021, at an annual average rate of 1,385 dwellings. Within Sedgefield Borough specifically, the plan provides for 4420 dwellings of over the plan period, at an average annual rate of 260 dwellings. The table below details the annual net housing provision for Sedgefield and County Durham as a Whole:

Figures Rounded	2004-11	2011-16	2016-21	2004-21
Sedgefield	280	260	225	260
County Durham	1,670	1,330	1,035	1,385

It goes on to state that different approaches and solutions will be needed in different areas, and these may not necessarily be related to growth, particularly outside the conurbation and Durham City. The priority in all areas will be to create and maintain sustainable communities and the scale of development will vary in different locations.

The RSS identifies Spennymoor as a regeneration town in the Durham Coalfield Regeneration area and therefore it is important that the function and vitality of Spennymoor is supported so that it can meet the local shopping, recreational and community need. It goes on to say that Spennymoor has a particular role to play as a main focal point for readily accessible local employment opportunities, services and facilities for its residents and those in the surrounding areas.

Policy 6 – the Locational Strategy describes how major assets and opportunities available in the North East and regeneration of those areas affected by social, economic and environmental problems will be supported by incorporating the Locational Strategy within plans, strategies and programmes. This will help achieve a balance between housing, economic development, infrastructure and services.

Spennymoor sits within the Tees Valley City-Region – Policy 10 states that “strategies, plans and programmes, and planning proposals, should support the polycentric development and redevelopment of the Tees Valley City-Region by, among other things, supporting the regeneration and development of towns including Spennymoor for sustainable growth without adversely impacting on the regeneration initiatives within the Tees Valley conurbation.”

In relation to employment land, Policy 18 Employment Land Portfolio states that Local Authorities should make provision for up to 3,435 ha of general employment land and key employment locations across the north east region. In Sedgefield Borough, the plan states that the Local Authority should provide for up to 55 ha of general employment land and a further 95 ha of land for key employment locations. The policy goes on to state that, in determining the land portfolio, planning authorities should undertake sub regional and local employment land assessments based on a 25 year level of supply and take up. These assessments should include consideration of the need to protect employment land and premises from redevelopment to alternative uses, where they are an essential part of the long-term employment land and premises portfolio, as well consideration of the potential of existing employment allocations no longer required for employment purposes for reallocation to alternative uses or de-allocation.

Finally, of particular relevance to the AAP, Policy 25 Urban and Rural Centres, states that Local Development Frameworks and planning proposals should ensure that, among other things, “where a need for retail-led regeneration has been identified for Regeneration Towns, retail and leisure development may be allowed above the scale that would be required for the centre to maintain its role; provided that it would support the sustainable regeneration of these centres without compromising the vitality and viability of other town centres.”

## **Regional Economic Strategy (RES)**

The One North East's RES (Leading the way) does not specifically mention Spennymoor. However, the strategy highlights the importance of hubs of innovation, one of which is NETPark in Sedgefield. The RES has been structured with a focus under three areas for action; Business, People and Place.

Encouraging business is a key element in growing the north east economy. Therefore, the key service sectors, which may be attracted and benefit town centre locations are Knowledge Intensive Business Services; Tourism and Hospitality; Commercial Creative; and Health and Social Care.

Whilst the references to town centres are limited, it is clear that the delivery of viable and sustainable town centres will have an important role in contributing to the delivery of economic objectives and targets for the region as a whole (for example in creating attractive places in which people will want to live). Furthermore, Spennymoor town centre can play a role as an economic development hub and employment centre.

## **2.4 Local**

### **County Durham Economic Strategy 2008-2013 (July 2008)**

The economic strategy for County Durham has been prepared by County Durham Economic Partnership (CDEP). The document sets out the CDEP's long term vision for the economy in 2023 and the actions that need to be put in place up until 2013.

Currently the performance gap between the County, North East and the UK economies is widening with County Durham having one of the lowest Gross Value Added per capita in the country. The CDEP wants to build a more prosperous County with high quality jobs, access to training and well paid jobs. The CDEP highlights the need to build consensus with a range of partners such as the Regional Development Agency (RDA), local government, businesses and also the public to achieve their agreed vision:

“By 2023 “Dynamic Durham” is known for its strong economy, commitment to lifelong learning, enhanced environment and its strong, healthy and safe communities. It is a great place to live, work, visit and invest.”

The strategy identifies three key objectives:

- “to make businesses more competitive and productive, and rebuild a culture of enterprise across the County
- to improve the employability and skills of the workforce and to help re-engage adults with work and learning

- to improve the economic competitiveness of the major towns and create a business infrastructure fit for the 21st Century.”

To meet the vision and objectives, the strategy sets out a number of priorities under the themes identified in the Regional Economic Strategy under the categories of Competitive Businesses, Competitive People and Competitive Places.

Spennymoor is in the Bishop Auckland – Darlington Corridor, an important gateway into the County. A key priority up to 2013 is further development at the Green Lane Industrial Estate in Spennymoor.

### **Sedgefield Borough Local Plan (1996)**

The existing Local Plan for Sedgefield Borough was adopted in 1996 and covers the period up to 2006. S1, S2 and S3 Policies are saved by a Secretary of State direction, under paragraph 1(3) of schedule 8 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

Policy S1 states that the role of the Borough’s Town Centres should be protected by granting planning permission for development appropriate to the scale of the town, and by granting permission for development which leads to the improvement of the centres through the redevelopment, improvement, or conversion of buildings.

Policy S2 sets out the types of uses which will be usually be acceptable within the town centres. These uses include shops, offices, food and drink outlets, businesses, hotels, community facilities, leisure and recreation facilities, car parks and public transport facilities.

Policy S3 states that proposals for new developments in the Borough’s town centres should normally be well related to public transport and road network, meet the councils’ car parking standards and provide visitor car parking.

## Sedgefield Borough Council Core Strategy Preferred Options

Sedgefield Borough Council's Core Strategy Preferred Options document was published in June 2007. The Core Strategy document sets out a spatial strategy for the Borough of Sedgefield and identifies the need for an Area Action Plan for Spennymoor town centre. The key aims and objectives of the Core Strategy are to:

- enhance social inclusion and well being
- improve the quality of where people live
- reduce the impact of development on climate change
- protect and enhance natural resources
- encourage and support a competitive and diverse economy.

Further details of the aims and objectives are outlined in Table 2.1 over the page.

The Core Strategy document sets out a number of preferred options under various policy theme headings. The principle options which are relevant to the Area Action Plan are as follows:

- Locational Development Strategy – proposing a sequential approach to development in which Spennymoor, alongside other 'main' towns, is prioritised as a location for development.
- Retailing and Town Centres – the role and function of town and local centres will be protected. The diversification of these centres will be supported provided that it does not have an adverse impact on the primary retail function. The provision of new hot food takeaways will be strictly controlled to ensure that there is no adverse affect on the health and wellbeing of the community.
- New tourist facilities should take account of the sequential approach to development and works of art should be used to provide focal points that contribute to the character and interest of civic spaces.
- Design of Built Environment – development must respond appropriately to the qualities of the site and its surroundings, utilise sustainable methods of construction, incorporate a clear network of routes that provide connectivity to the wider settlement, use building frontages to define streets, ensure motor vehicles do not dominate the urban form, achieve enclosure to streets and spaces, incorporate a network of open and green spaces and accommodate recycling and servicing requirements in ways which minimise visual intrusion.
- Landscape Character – development must respect and respond appropriately to the distinctive qualities of the surrounding landscape character.
- Conservation – development within or affecting a conservation area must respect the area's historic or architectural quality, or provide a successful contrast with it.

- Transport – development must demonstrate how it will reduce the need to travel, including accounting for reducing private car usage, encouraging alternative forms of sustainable transport, traffic safety, improving traffic and pedestrian flow, avoiding harm to the character of the town or village as a result of the traffic generated.
- Energy – development must demonstrate how it accords with the energy hierarchy in respect of: reduce the need for energy; maximise energy efficiency; supply energy from renewable sources; where fossil fuels need to be used, use as efficiently as possible.
- Open and Green Space – Development should maintain, improve and create community access to areas of open and green space by improving the quantity, quality and accessibility of open and green space provision.

**Table 2.1: Core Strategy Aims and Objectives**AIM 1: To enhance social inclusion and well being

Delivered through the objectives of:

- meeting the needs of all sectors of the population, especially the elderly;
- supporting where appropriate or endeavour to support the retention of existing community facilities, and where required, encouraging the provision of new facilities;
- promoting mixed-use developments;
- improving accessibility to goods and services; encouraging healthy lifestyles;
- encouraging wider community involvement in the planning process;
- improving greenspaces and access to them;
- providing for recognised housing needs in safe and attractive neighbourhoods.

AIM 2: To improve the quality of where people live

Delivered through the objectives of:

- regenerating areas suffering from deprivation and/or degradation;
- improving community safety and reducing the fear of crime;
- conserving, maintaining and enhancing the quality of landscapes and townscapes;
- securing high quality design and layout in all new developments;
- provide high quality, affordable housing for future generation.

AIM 3: To reduce the impact of development on climate change

Delivered through the objectives of:

- supporting a clean, safe and accessible public transport system;
- reducing the need to travel and reliance on the private car;
- promoting sustainable construction and design;
- promoting energy efficiency and the generation of energy from renewable sources;
- minimising the risk of flooding;
- promoting high quality design that takes account of future climate change;
- encouraging habitat creation and habitat retention as part of new development.

AIM 4: To protect and enhance natural resources

Delivered through the objectives above:

- adopting a sequential approach to land development;
- conserve, enhance and create biodiversity and geodiversity sites;
- prioritising the re-use of previously developed land and buildings in sustainable locations;
- taking account of the physical constraints on the development of land;
- reducing pollution and preventing the deterioration of land quality;
- encouraging the efficient use of natural resources.

AIM 5: To encourage and support a competitive and diverse economy

Delivered through the objectives of:

- providing opportunities for the development of a competitive and diverse economic base;
- ensuring the provision of high quality employment sites;
- encouraging the provision of tourism, leisure or artistic activities;
- encouraging the development of social and community enterprises;
- supporting vibrant town centres;
- maintaining a flexible supply of business sites and premises that meet the modern needs of business.

## **Sedgefield Borough Community Strategy**

The Sedgefield Borough Community Strategy analyses the main features of the Borough and sets out the key issues that need to be tackled. One of these issues is the regeneration of towns and villages. Its aim is to implement a comprehensive improvement programme to create a sustainable location that is an attractive and vibrant place in which people can live, work and do business.

Specific priorities for Spennymoor include the development of the Borough's unique cultural tourism attractions. By 2014 the strategy aims to create strong and vibrant town centres able to meet the needs of communities offering a range of services, leisure and shopping facilities. The key activity is to support an extensive programme of upgrading work to Spennymoor.

Currently, 39% of local employment is within the declining manufacturing sector. One of the Borough's aims is to attract organisations involved in new and emerging technologies. Therefore, a key priority is to create a strong and sustainable business base which will stabilise the manufacturing sector, whilst encouraging greater levels of service sector employment.

A key priority of the Community Strategy is to enhance transport provision throughout the Borough via integrated travel measures and public transport improvements in Newton Aycliffe, Shildon and Spennymoor. Major highway maintenance on the A177 between Sedgefield and Thorpe Larches and the A688 Spennymoor Bypass will also improve the provision of a high quality transport system.

A further key issue is the role of local town and village centres, which have struggled to maintain their competitiveness in the light of changing shopping patterns. Town centre management initiatives are in place in the Borough's major towns to oversee physical and environmental improvements and to encourage new investment.

## **Sedgefield Economic Development Strategy 2007-2011**

This strategy details how partners in Sedgefield will work together to support economic activity and increase levels of local prosperity. The key priorities are categorised as follows:

### **People**

- Maximise the participation of local people in the labour market;
- Develop the skills of local residents and employees to meet future demand.

### **Place**

- Maximise the Borough's contribution to the regional economy;
- Improve the attractiveness of the Borough as a sustainable business location.

### **Business**

- Increase levels of enterprise;
- Improve the sustainability of the existing business base.

A particular focus is proposed around Spennymoor and Green Lane Industrial Estate due to its close proximity (6 miles) to Durham City. The strategy also proposes to support the regeneration of the town centre through the production of the town centre and specifically states the need to diversify into non retail activities.

### **Quality of Life Survey 2007**

The Quality of Life Survey was commissioned by Sedgefield Borough Local Strategic Partnership in order to collect information that would help partnership organisations improve their understanding of local needs and requirements and maximise people and businesses economical potential. The key priorities for Spennymoor residents are:

- To feel safe when walking in their local town centre after dark;
- To have a good employment base for local job opportunities;
- To provide areas for teenagers to socialise in a safe social way;
- To have high employment levels;
- For people to treat each other with respect and consideration;
- A secure environment where the community has no burglary/ theft from homes or gardens;
- To have safe streets which reduce dangerous driving and speeding vehicles;
- A clean environment which is free of litter and dog fouling;
- To have good accessible parking provision;
- A safe environment which discourages people from using or dealing drugs.

### **Durham Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-2023 (Draft)**

A Draft Sustainable Communities Strategy has recently been prepared by County Durham Community Partnership that will help underpin the future County-wide Local Development Framework. The draft document identifies seven key priority themes for the County: Economic wellbeing; Achieve; Physical Place; Health and Wellbeing; Safe; Enjoy; and Positive Contribution. Under the 'Physical Place' theme, the following priorities have been identified:

- A high quality clean, green, attractive and accessible environment;
- A high quality local built and historic environment that meets the needs of communities;
- Provision of sustainable residential accommodation across all tenures, meeting identified needs, in particular those of vulnerable groups;
- Enhance choice and access to sustainable and integrated transport networks;
- a balanced natural environment with a reduced impact on climate change.

## 3.0 Baseline

### 3.1 Strategic Context

The regeneration of Spennymoor town centre must be set in the context of:

- The Sedgefield Borough Council Core Strategy Preferred Options Document, which identifies the need for Area Action Plans for the Borough's main town centres.
- A robust national planning framework promoting sustainable development, mixed use and town centres – Key Planning Policy Statements that are relevant are PPS 1 (Delivering Sustainable Development), Supplement to PPS 1 on Planning and Climate Change, PPS6 (Town Centres), and PPS12 (Local Spatial Planning).
- An ambitious regional spatial planning agenda which reinforces the sequential approach to development in respect of putting town centres first, and identifies Spennymoor as a “regeneration town” within the coalfield area and Tees Valley sub-region.
- A new system of local governance (i.e. the new Durham Unitary Authority), which, when it comes into effect in April 2009, will have implications for the delivery of local services and spatial planning at the county and local levels.
- A Community Strategy that has identified the regeneration of Spennymoor as a key priority in helping to foster a vibrant and sustainable community at the local level.
- Growth. On the 15<sup>th</sup> July 2008 Spennymoor was awarded Growth Point status as part of the South East Durham Growth Point area. As a result, it will have access to a national pot of over £100 million for infrastructure investment to support housing growth and sustainable development.

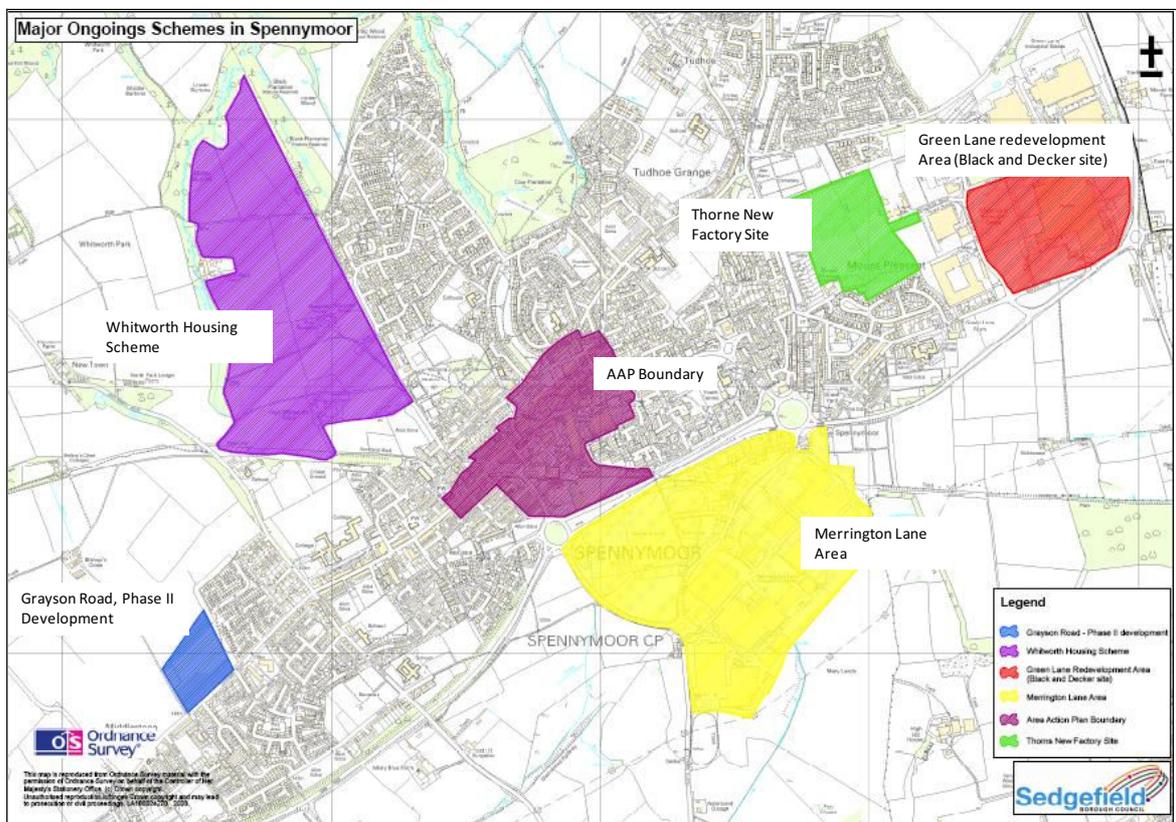
The last of these points is particularly significant in respect of its potential to shape the future development of the town centre. Figure 3.1 over the page illustrates the emerging development proposals in Spennymoor. They include:

- South Spennymoor Urban Extension, which offers the potential to accommodate upwards of 1000 new dwellings;
- Durham Gate, comprising approximately 45,000 square meters of office floor space, as well as new residential development and ancillary services; and

- A new secondary school. (Durham County Council are considering consolidating the existing secondary schools)

These developments represent both opportunities and challenges in respect of the future role of Spennymoor town centre. They offer the potential to increase its customer base and generate more demand and commercial interest. However, there is also a risk that the opportunity will be missed if the town is not developed in such a way as to capture this additional potential. Therefore, the future development of the town centre must be planned in a way which meets this challenge.

**Figure 3.1: Emerging Development Opportunities and Proposals in Spennymoor**



Source: Sedgefield Borough Council

### 3.2 Socio Economic Analysis

A socio economic analysis has been undertaken of the Spennymoor area as a whole. The analysis draws on standard data sources across a range of socio-economic indicators. The key messages from the analysis are:

- The town has a population of approximately 19,000 and an ageing population (at the time of the 2001 Census);
- However, the potential exists for this population to significantly increase as a result of housing developments that are coming forward on the edges of the town;
- The employment base is dominated by a declining manufacturing sector;
- There has been a decline of the town's role as an employment centre;
- Occupation and skill profiles mirror the employment structure – examples of occupations?;
- There is a lower income profile (“blue collar enterprise, ties of the community and municipal dependency are dominant mosaic classifications);
- The town as a whole has low value housing stock (65% homes in council tax band A);
- 32.2% of the population does not have access to a private car/van.

The socio-economic characteristics of the town carry a number of implications for the planning and regeneration of the town as whole, as well as specifically for the town centre. Notably, the AAP can play an important role in helping to improve socio-economic conditions through:

- Developing the town centre as an employment/enterprise hub, providing new workspace and other employment generating activities;
- Recognising and developing a strong service offering that will create new employment opportunities and more income in the local area;
- Consider the need/opportunity for the provision of improved public/social infrastructure facilities (for example, health centres, council services, training facilities) that will improve access to and quality of, service delivery.

There is also an opportunity for the town centre to grow its customer base given the growth of the town's population that is anticipated, and provide new services and activities that will meet the needs of this new population.

### 3.3 Town Centre Performance

Town Centre surveys have been undertaken across all the town centres within the Borough between 2003 and 2007. The surveys measured a range of vitality and viability indicators. The key issues from the town centre health and viability check are:

- Shrinking quantity of town centre shopping provision over the period 2004 to 2007

- Loss in convenience and comparison floor space and a small reduction in service and residential;
- Vacant floorspace has increased from 2190 m<sup>2</sup> to 3236 m<sup>2</sup> over the same period
- Several fascia gaps identified by recent retail studies.

Key Challenges are:

- Build on the provision of the leisure centre, bars, night club and Bingo Hall;
- Sustain a diverse range of shop floorspace yet maintaining A1 as the prime use class;
- How to control the rise in A5 (Hot Food Takeaways) in the town centre;
- Increase and maintain town centre footfall levels;
- Provide a high quality public transport network to access key services and jobs for the 32.3% of the population who do not have access to a car or van;
- Increase passing trade through on street provision;
- Achieving an appropriate mix of residential development in and around the town centre.

### 3.4 Market Assessment

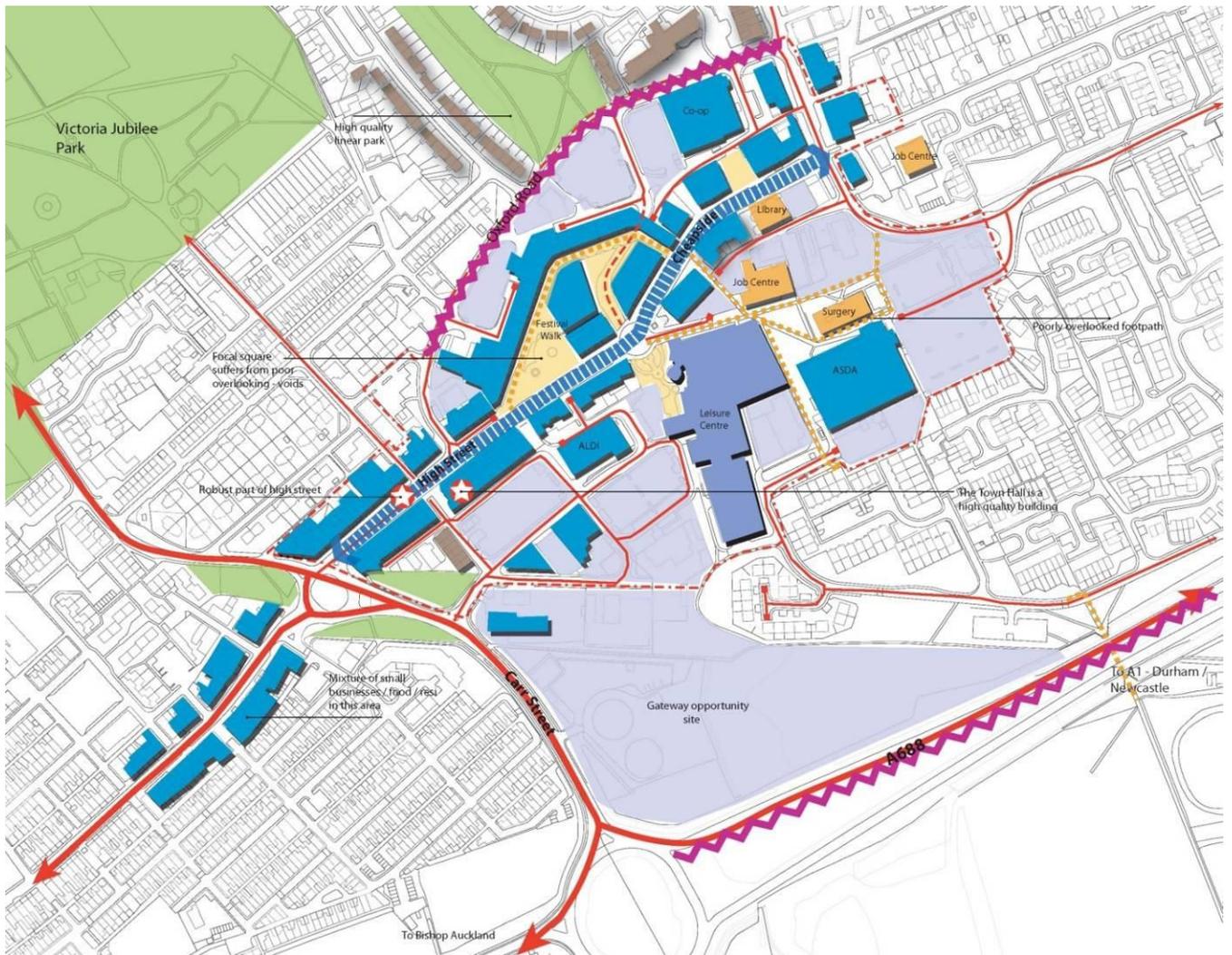
In general, Spennymoor town centre's property market performance can be regarded as relatively weak. Aside from strong interest from the budget grocery food operators, the centre is characterised by low levels of occupier and developer activity and a modest retail sector. Looking ahead, the future success of the town centre will depend on the degree to which it is able to reposition itself to attract commercial interest. The Area Action Plan can play a key role in helping to transform the centre's fortunes. The key market challenges for the centre include:

- Adding to the retail offer by providing accommodation for operators/activities that are not currently present in the town centre
- Developing an eating/drinking leisure market to complement the existing leisure centre and retail offer
- Promoting opportunities for workspace, possibly on the edge of the town centre that benefit from the main road frontage
- Town centre residential development, including the possibility of retirement flats.

### 3.5 Place Analysis

A place analysis was undertaken to establish the context of Spennymoor Town Centre. It analysed the urban structure, building quality, the public realm, access and movement, and identified opportunity sites. The diagram below illustrates the existing form of the town centre.

Figure 3.2: Place Analysis



The key issues and challenges for the centre include:

#### Issues

- Large “shatter zone” lacking frontage and natural surveillance;
- Voids and Festival Walk present a poor image;
- Poor gateways and legibility;
- Roads dominate the scene;
- Oxford Road is a barrier between the community and the Town Centre;
- A lack of retail variety;
- No public frontage on the A688. Therefore, the town can be missed;
- Buildings are in poor state of maintenance and signage;
- Potential lack of demand for town centre residential, offices, new retail space etc;
- Town centre vitality is compromised by big and numerous supermarkets;
- A fragmented urban structure;
- Many vacant sites and surface car parks;
- Lack of activity on the high street due to vehicle restrictions;

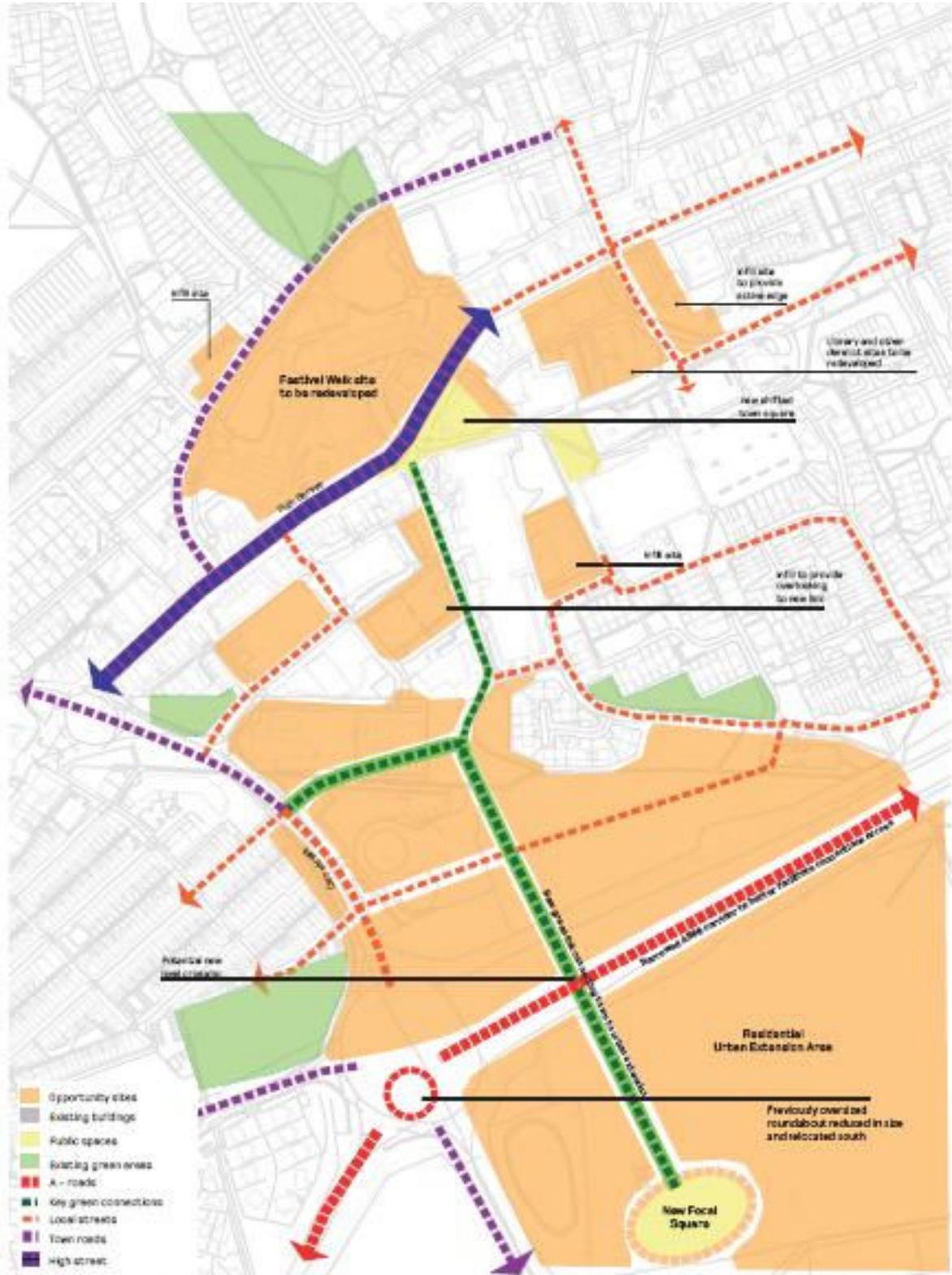
#### Challenges

- Utilise the substantially sized development sites;
- Improve structure through new development;
- Create green links to Victoria Jubilee Park and Tudhoe Green;
- Improve the mix and quality of development to boost the centre;
- Improve circulation and rationalise car parking-locate in less obtrusive locations;
- Continue shop front improvements;
- Potential difficulty acquiring infill sites;
- Growth of population on the wrong side of the bypass would create new barriers to be overcome and would encourage car use;
- New development repeating mistakes of the past (e.g. retail sheds with poor frontages);
- Improve the current poor arrival experience;
- Improve the Festival Walk retail precinct so that it does not detract from the vitality of the town centre;

The diagram overleaf illustrates the key development opportunity sites within and in close proximity to the town centre and potential access and movement enhancements which are discussed later in the report. The development sites are:

1. Gateway Site including the former Gasworks Site
2. Festival Walk
3. Library, surrounding derelict buildings and vacant land
4. Surface car parks
5. Telephone exchange building behind leisure centre
6. Smaller infill sites

Figure 3.3: Opportunity Sites



### 3.6 Summary – SWOT Analysis

The table below provides a framework on which to build a strategy to underpin the Area Action Plan: strengths should be safeguarded and nurtured, weaknesses should be tackled, and the town centre must be positioned to both take advantage of the opportunities, and limit the impacts of the threats.

Strengths	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessibility – well connected to road routes and bus corridors</li> <li>• Car parking availability makes it a convenient shopping destination</li> <li>• Strong base in food retail</li> <li>• Leisure centre is key asset/attraction</li> <li>• Modest level of character created by traditional/landmark buildings (e.g. town hall)</li> <li>• Car parking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Several significant land owners active in regeneration process</li> <li>• Fascia gaps in the high street represent opportunities to attract new retail operators</li> <li>• Diversification of activities – public services, workspace, leisure</li> <li>• Opportunity for new civic focus (i.e. new town hall)</li> <li>• Former Gas Works site represents key gateway development opportunity</li> <li>• Enhance green linkages to Victoria Park</li> <li>• Growth in town’s population creates opportunities for new shops and services</li> </ul>
Weaknesses	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Catchment area relatively small and currently dominated by average and low income groups</li> <li>• Limited quality and range of shops and services (i.e. particularly comparison sector)</li> <li>• Festival Walk represents eyesore and has diluted/dispersed retail core</li> <li>• Lack of prominence/visibility to A688</li> <li>• Lack of permeability and connectivity within centre</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase in leakage of spend to competing centres as they raise their game</li> <li>• Growth of food stores that dominate offer and opportunity sites, squeezing out other functions and land uses</li> <li>• Land assembly difficulties – cost and time delays could limit aspirations for bringing sites to the market</li> <li>• Market weaknesses – limits to the number and type of operators that are willing to invest in the centre</li> <li>• Too much residential development could detract from ‘active uses’ focus of centre</li> <li>• Uncertainty of planning policy in view of Local Government Reorganisation</li> </ul>

Stakeholder Questions:

Q1: Do you think the issues and challenges described above are accurate and represent an adequate evidence base on which to develop an Area Action Plan for the town centre? Please explain.

Q2: Are there any other issues and challenges you think are relevant?

## 4.0 Vision and Objectives

### 4.1 Vision

The vision has been developed through a thorough consideration of the existing policy frameworks and their implications for the town centre (as set out in Chapter 2), a socio-economic, market and physical appraisal of the town centre, and consultation with stakeholders.

The proposed vision is based on three core propositions:

- i. To create a vibrant and progressive town centre that meets the needs and aspirations of the town's growing population and transforms its role as a sub-regional district shopping centre.*
- ii. To redefine the centre's offer and establish a strong and distinctive range of complementary uses and activities.*
- iii. To remodel the built fabric and create a high quality and sustainable town centre environment.*

This vision is derived from our analysis of the issues and challenges facing the town centre, and specifically, the following factors:

- **The Existing Policy Framework**, as defined in the Sedgefield Borough Council Core Strategy Preferred Options document, which identifies Spennymoor as a main town centre and proposes its regeneration and diversification of uses.
- **Local Aspirations**, which are to establish a robust, lively and vibrant town centre which meets local needs and acts as a focal point for the community. There is a need to improve the town centre to enable it to fulfil its potential as a major centre serving the local population and surrounding catchment area.
- **Growth Potential** - There is an opportunity presented by the growing population in and around Spennymoor and the recent designation of the settlement as part of the South East Durham Growth Point. Growth in population means growth in the customer base. In order to benefit from this there needs to be an improvement in the offer, access and connections.
- **Shopping Trends** - However, national trends in shopping habits such as retail decentralisation, growth of larger centres and e-tailing have squeezed small town centres like Spennymoor.

Therefore, there is a need to reinvent/reposition its role, create a distinctive offer and promote the diversification of uses.

- **Investment** - There is a need for new investment in the built environment, to provide a high quality environment which offers a range of economic opportunities, housing and community facilities.
- **Sustainability** and design quality are needed to ensure that the regeneration of Spennymoor Town Centre is future proofed, and meets Government objectives in respect of environmental construction standards.

We set out below the key objectives in taking forward this vision.

## 4.2 Objectives

### 1. Enhance the retail offer through plugging key fascia gaps

The Sedgefield Retail Gap Analysis demonstrated that there is currently an under-provision of floorspace in several retail categories including Hardware & Household Goods, Children & Infants Wear and Florists. There is also no presence of Toys/Games/Hobbies in the town centre. Key to enhancing the offer must be a strategy to broaden the range of shops and services.

### 2. Developing a leisure cluster for the town centre

Leisure is considered to be a key opportunity given the existence of the Spennymoor Leisure Centre in the town centre. The development of a cluster of leisure activities would include the following key priorities:

- Expand the leisure centre's role and offer and integration with other services;
- Promote the links between health services and leisure under the concept of "healthy living";
- Encourage specialist leisure retail opportunities;
- Promote an evening economy through cafes, bars and restaurants;
- Consider opportunities for new sports facilities linked to the leisure centre.

### 3. Develop the role of the centre as an employment and enterprise hub

In order to support the growth, diversification and regeneration of the town centre, there will need to be employment opportunities. This was highlighted in the Quality of Life Survey where one of the key priorities is to have a good employment base for local job opportunities. This is further supported by the RSS, Sedgefield Borough Community Strategy and Economic Development Strategy

Concentration of office space within the town centre would create a more vibrant town centre which is easily accessible for all. Furthermore, the close proximity to Durham makes Spennymoor an attractive option for new investment

4. Expand the civic/public service role of the centre

Local services can play an important role in bolstering the offer of the town centre, in concentrating footfall, and in facilitating investment. The rationalising and moderating of local services, including through the local government reorganisation may present some opportunities to facilitate this option.

5. Improve access and movement patterns in and around the centre

This objective will promote and support a range of access and movement types including improved bicycle access, pedestrian access from key housing areas and car parks, and will increase the passing trade on the High Street which is currently restricted to buses only

An improved bus service which is legible and reliable for all will support the RSS's sustainable development agenda of ensuring good accessibility of homes to jobs and services by public transport.

6. Promote town centre living

The promotion of town centre living will bring a customer base into the town centre, create a natural surveillance to improve community safety and bring forward infill sites for development.

7. Create a high quality, distinctive and attractive town centre environment

The Retail Gap Analysis stated that improving the general ambience and environment would encourage more shoppers to visit the town centre. Furthermore, the Quality of Life survey highlighted the importance of a well maintained and safe environment, which can be achieved though high quality urban design is a key priority of theirs.

8. Promote sustainability and energy efficiency.



The promotion of a sustainable and energy efficient town centre should be achieved through functionality a form of development that encourages low car based transport and employs standards relating to the quality and type of construction.

Stakeholder Questions:

Q3: Do you agree with the vision?

Q4: Do you agree with the objectives?

Q5: Are there any other objectives that you feel require incorporating into this further?

## 5.0 Options

### 5.1 Approach

This section sets out the range of possible options that are available as a means of taking forward the vision and objectives for Spennymoor Town Centre. The options are summarised under the following headings:

- Town Centre Boundaries
- Sectors and land uses
- Development sites
- Public Realm
- Access and Movement

In some cases, there are linkages between the various options and categories. However, for presentational purposes, we have set out the options separately, indicating the linkages where appropriate.

### 5.2 Town Centre Boundaries

The definition of the town centre boundary is an important consideration in respect of delimiting the area within which specific town centre policies will apply. We consider there to be two key options that require consideration in this respect:

- a) Whether to expand the town centre boundaries to include the former Gas Works site or retain the boundary as set out in the existing Local Plan
- b) Whether to introduce a core and secondary area within the town centre boundaries to allow for a two –tier approach to land use policy

Expanding the town centre boundaries to include the former Gas Works site would allow for the enlargement of the town centre and would enable the former Gas Works site to be brought forward for development for town centre related uses. It would also create a “gateway” site to the town centre from the A688 road. The two possible town centre boundaries are illustrated in Figure 5.1 below.

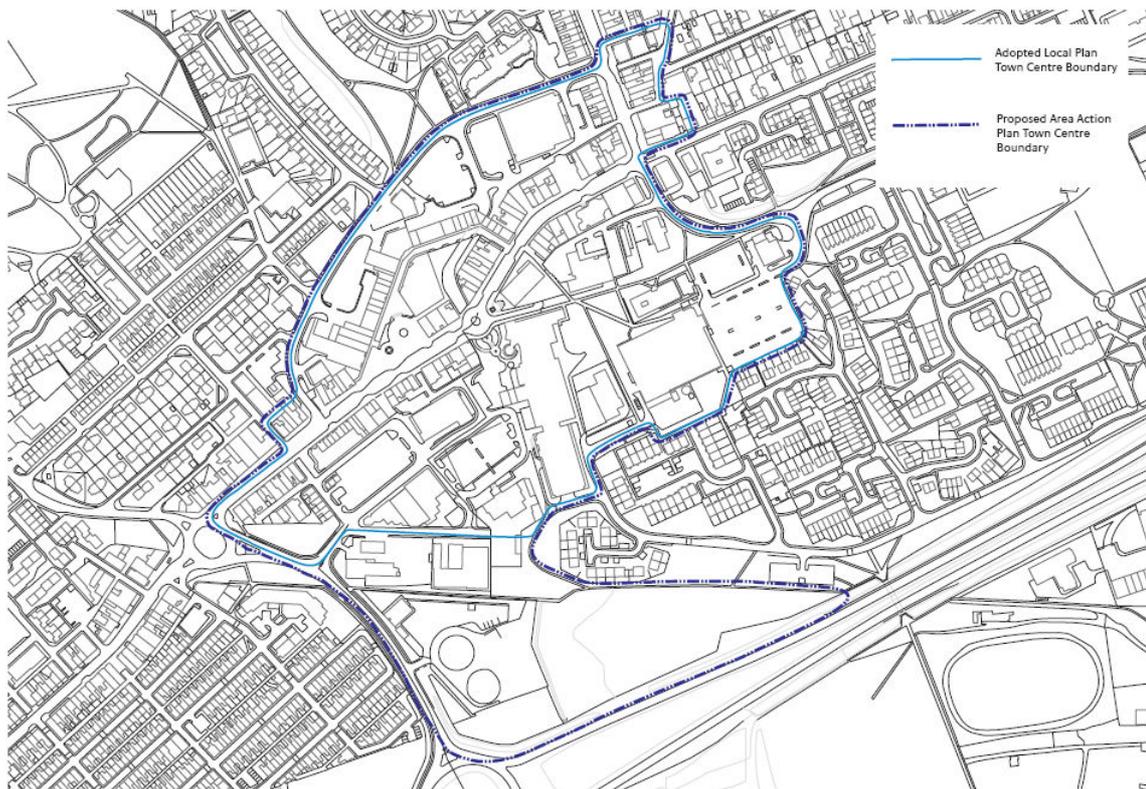
The introduction of core and secondary retail areas would allow for prime retail uses to be concentrated into a core area with other supporting uses (e.g. leisure, evening economy, services) in a secondary area. The rationale for adopting this approach is that it:

- Allows for spatial consolidation of prime retail area, thus creating a viable and focused shopping environment
- Provides opportunities for promoting diversification of uses – e.g. leisure, services, town centre living, employment, in secondary locations.

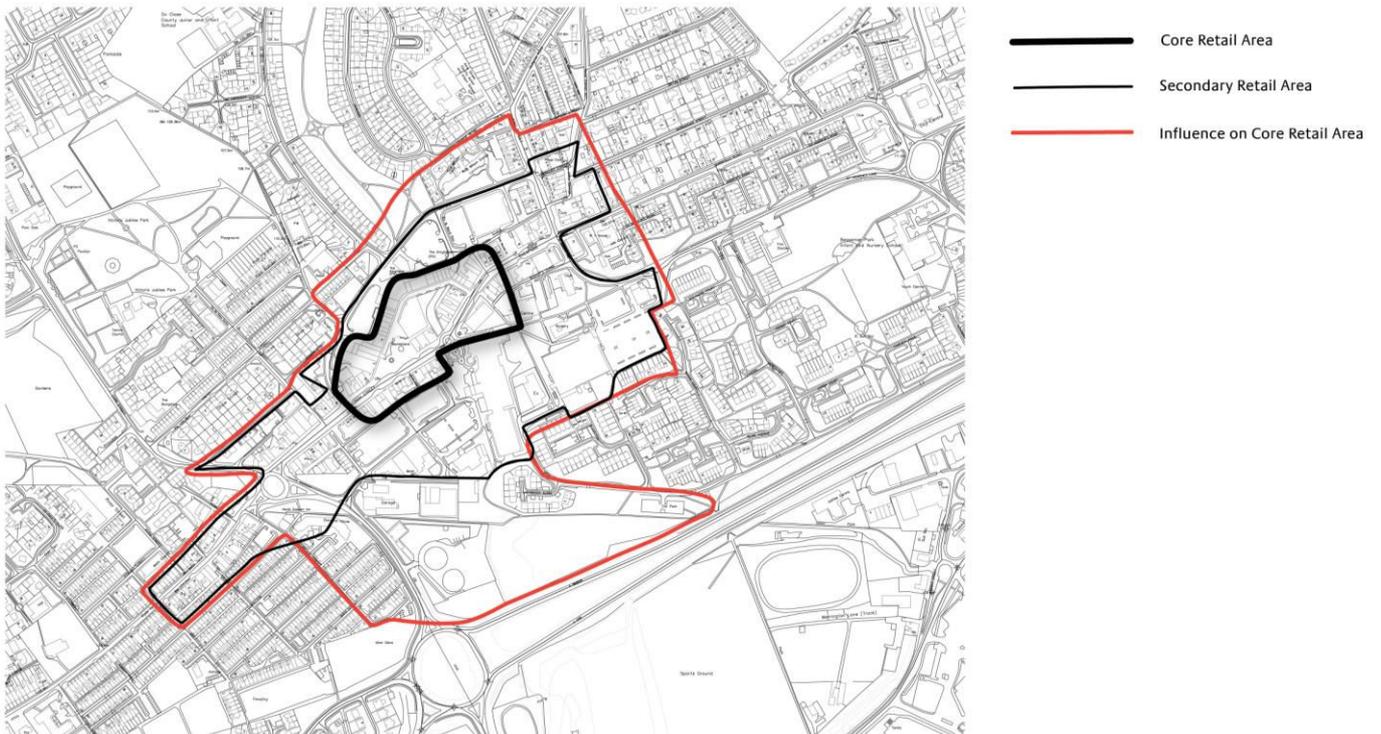
Figure 5.2 presents a proposed core and secondary policy area.

<b>Town Centre Boundary Options</b>	
A.	Expand town centre boundaries to include the former Gas Works site or retain existing Local Plan boundaries
B.	Introduce core and secondary policy areas or retain one policy area

**Figure 5.1: Town Centre Boundary Options**



**Figure 5.2: Primary and Secondary Retail Area Option**



## 5.4 Development Sites

Three principal areas of physical change have been identified in the town centre:

- Festival Walk shopping centre and environs
- Former Gas Works site
- Cheapside

All of these areas are considered to offer significant development potential which could underpin the regeneration of the town centre. Festival Walk is currently in poor condition with a number of voids and is in need of renewal. The former Gas Works site is a vacant site that occupies an important position at

the gateway to the town from the A688 and offers the opportunity to improve the linkages between this and the town centre. The Cheapside site is currently occupied by a number of public service buildings that are all in a poor condition and in low density surroundings, yet occupying a central position in the town centre.

There are also a number of infill sites which offer development potential, such as behind the High Street adjacent to the leisure centre. However, the nature and scale of these sites is such that they are not considered to warrant detailed options appraisal through this process, but be considered as part of the overall strategy for the town centre.

**Figure 5.3 Key Areas of Change**

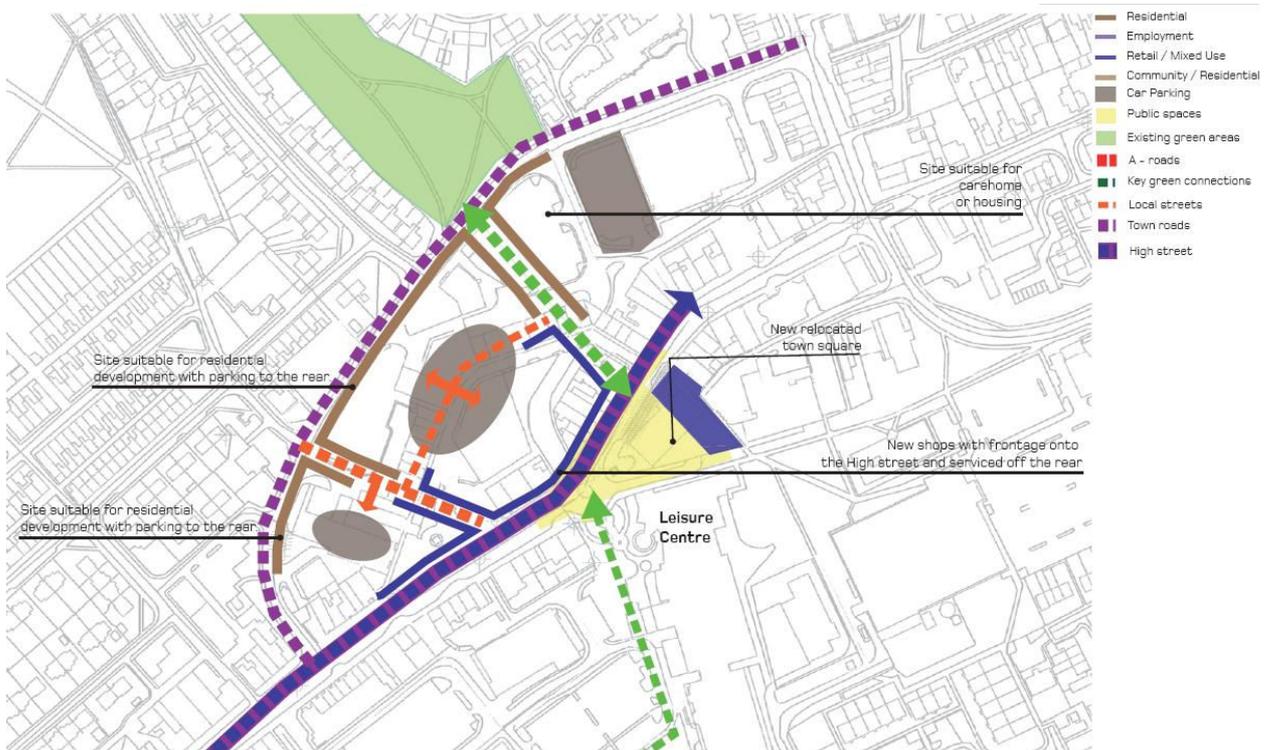


## 5.4.1 Festival Walk

### Festival Walk Option A: Shopping Centre

- Redevelopment of Festival Walk Shopping Centre
- Replacement with new retail units fronting High Street including small food store
- Land to rear utilised for servicing, car parking and infill residential development
- Public square and bandstand relocated to site fronting Leisure Centre
- Possibility of inclusion of existing retail units fronting high street in comprehensive redevelopment
- Option to include covered/arcade style shopping centre desirable
- Provision of green link to Victoria Jubilee Park

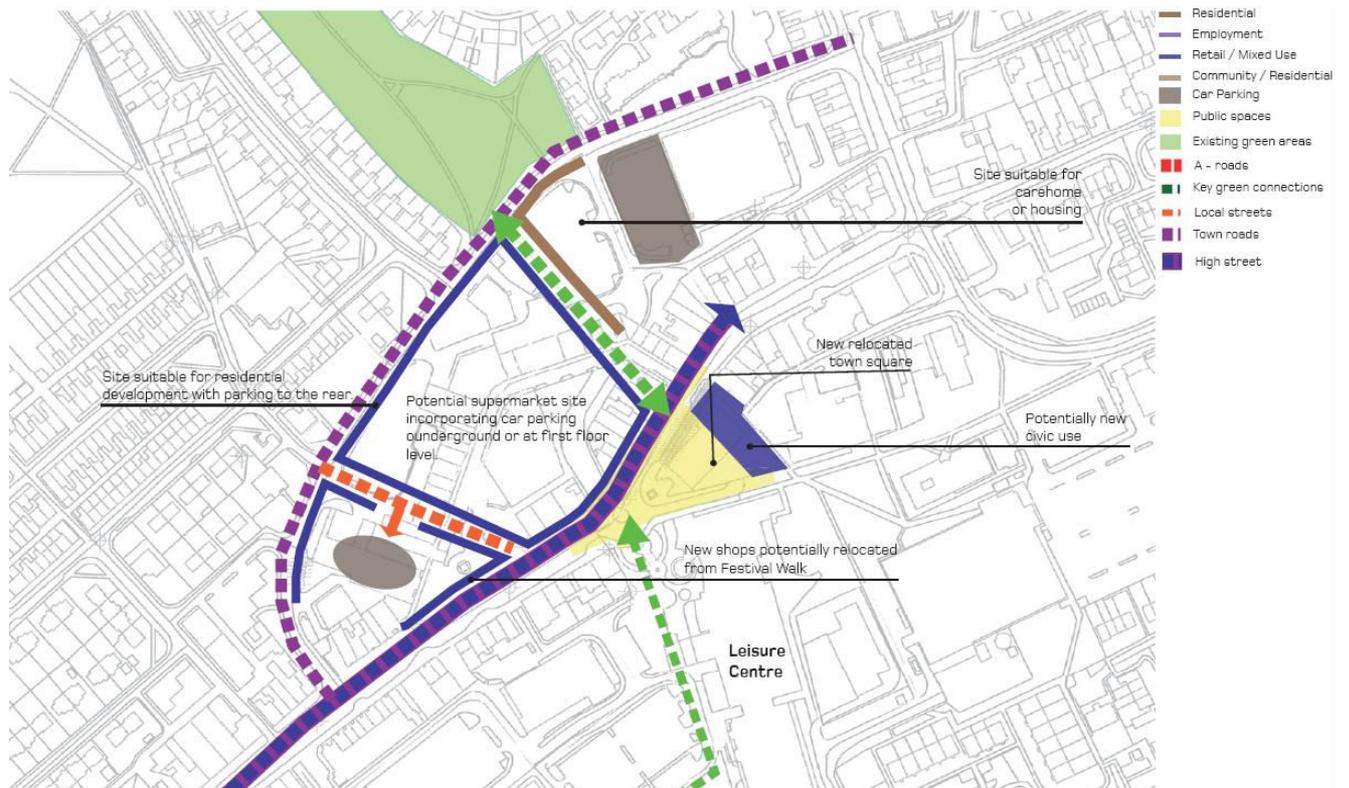
Figure 5.4: Festival Walk Option A: Shopping Centre



### Festival Walk Option B: Food-Store

- Replacement of existing shopping centre with new supermarket and small number of additional retail units
- Retention of existing public space and bandstand
- Rear of site retained for car parking and servicing

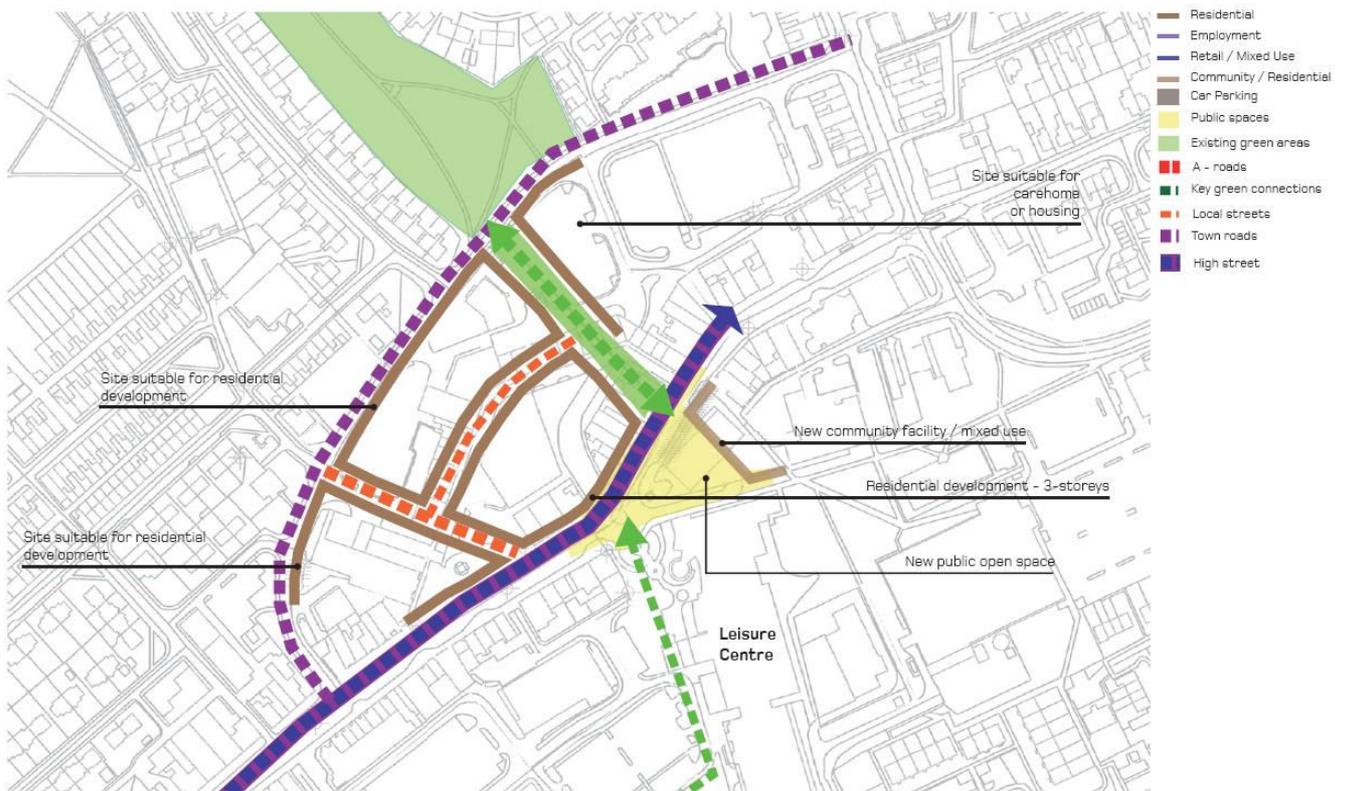
**Figure 5.5: Festival Walk Option B: Food-Store**



### Festival Walk Option C Residential Led

- Residential redevelopment of Festival Walk with minimum active uses fronting high street
- (Retail activity refocused onto the former Gas Works site)

**Figure 5.6: Festival Walk Option C Residential Led**

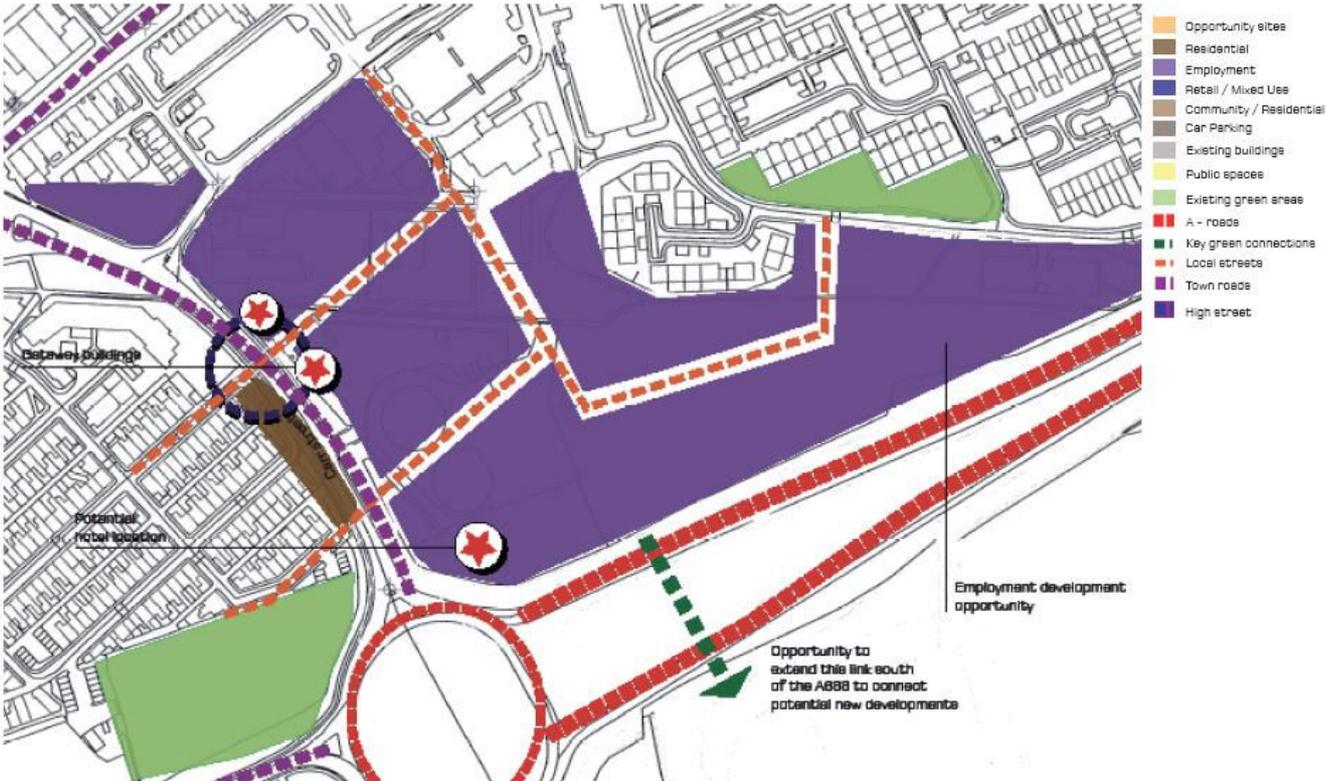


### 5.4.2 The Former Gas Works Site

#### Former Gas Works Site Option A – Employment led

- Redevelopment of site for employment uses
- Industrial/office workspace
- Possibility of hotel or office gateway landmark building

Figure 5.7: Former Gas Works Site Option A – Employment led

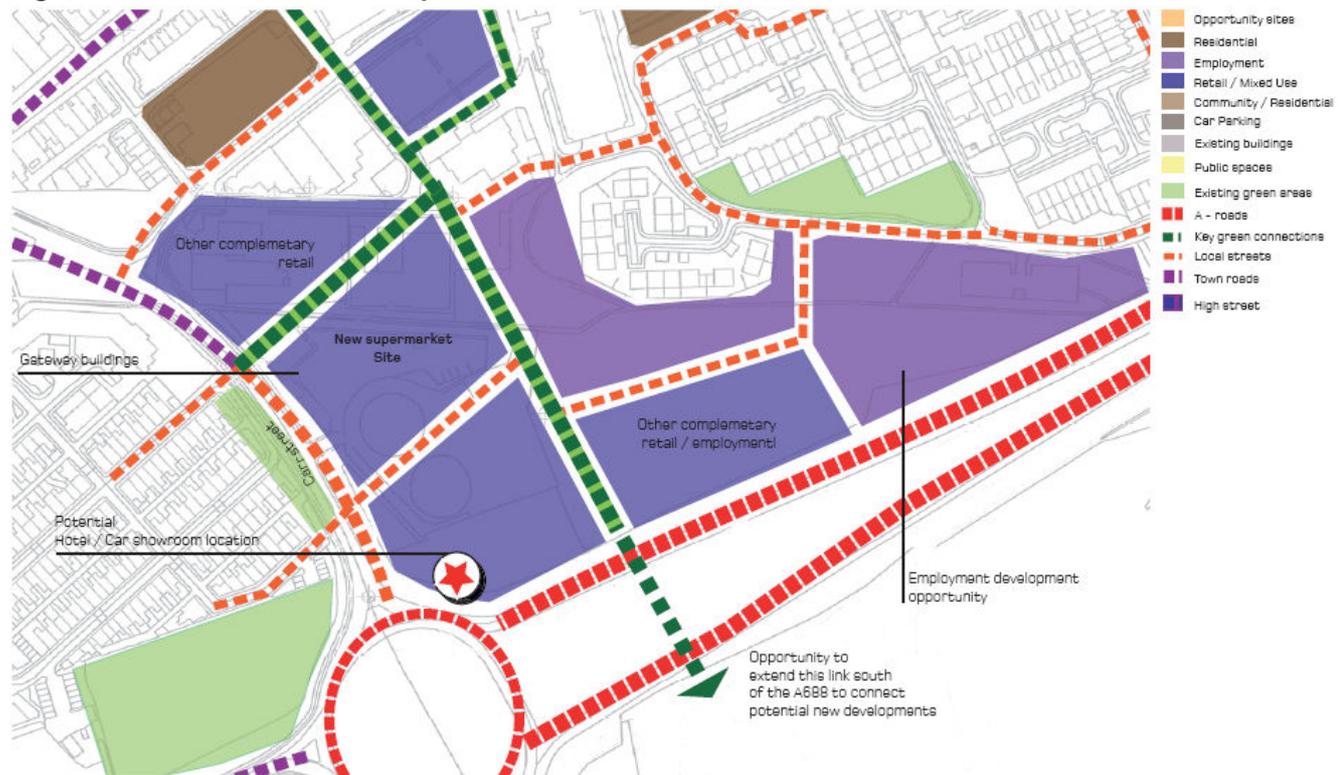




### Former Gas Works Option C: Retail/leisure led

- Refocusing of town centre onto the former Gas Works site
- New large supermarket with additional retail units for comparison goods shopping
- Possibility of family pub and hotel

**Figure 5.9: Former Gas Works Option C: Retail/leisure led**

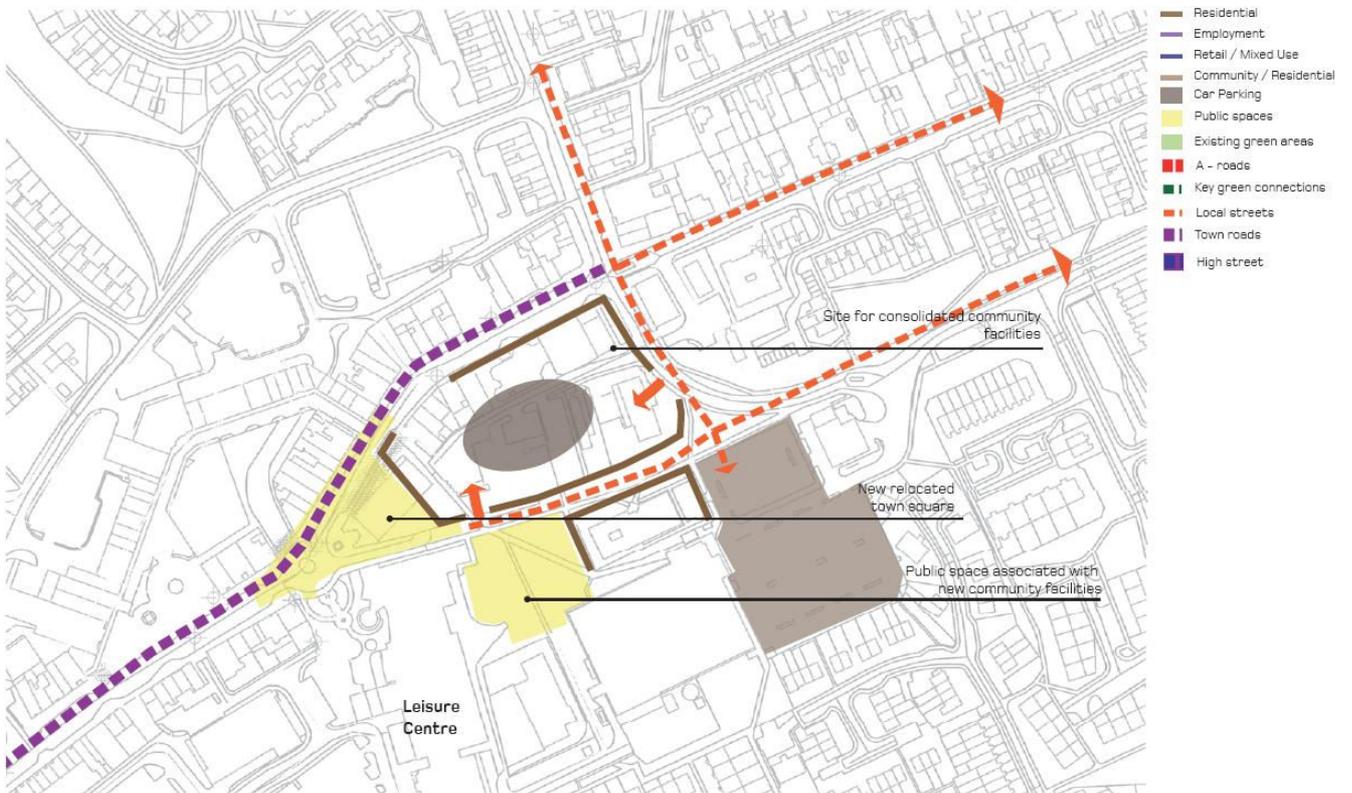


### 5.4.3 Cheapside

#### Cheapside Option A: Civic Quarter

- Replacement of existing health centre, library and surgery with new integrated service centre
- Inclusion of local government services
- Links to leisure centre through provision of healthy living style activities

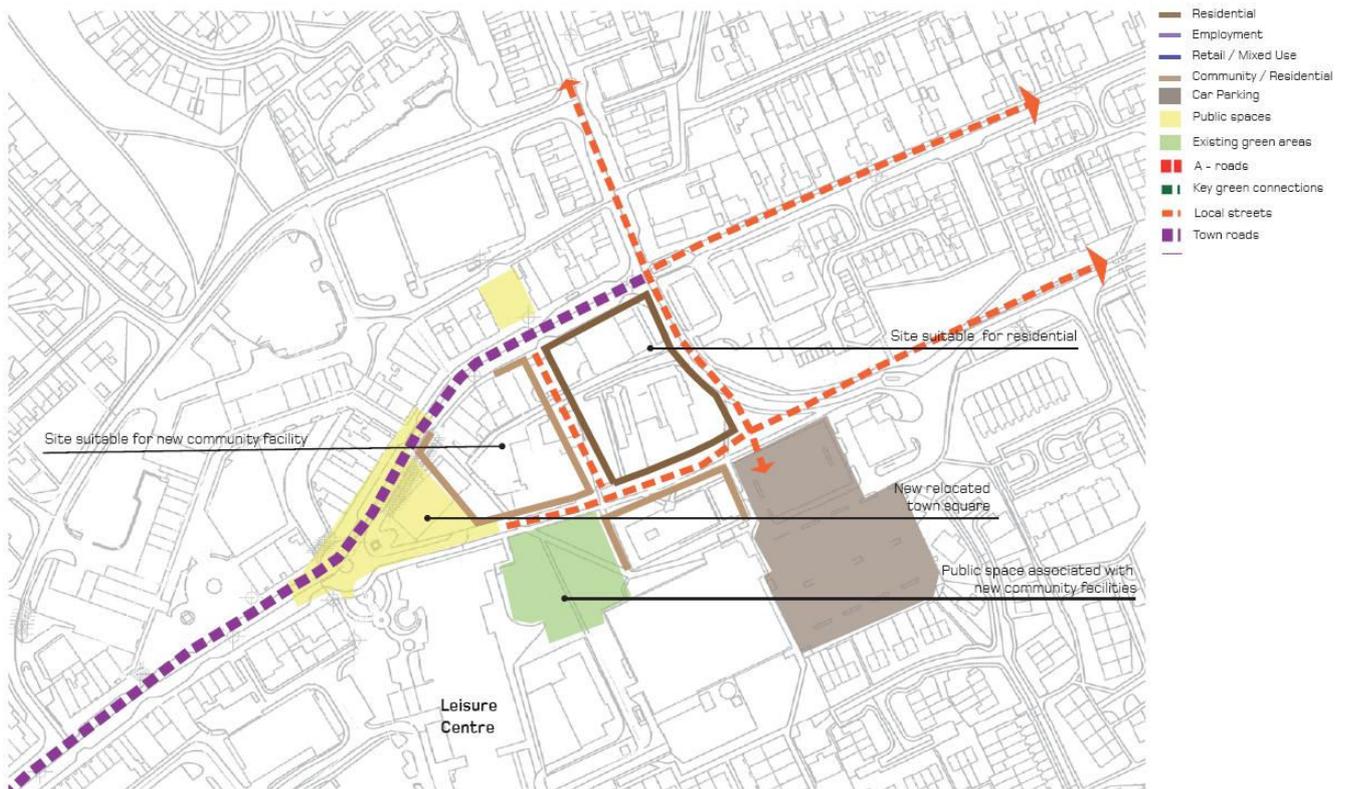
Figure 5.10 Cheapside Option A: Civic Quarter



### Cheapside Option B: Mixed Use

- Redevelopment of site for smaller public service centre
- Partial development of site for residential use

**Figure 5.11: Cheapside Option B Mixed Use**



#### 5.4.4 Summary

##### **Areas of Change**

##### **Issues**

The need to revitalise Festival Walk  
Identifying the optimum use and approach to key development sites

##### **Development Options**

##### Festival Walk

- A – Shopping Centre
- B – Food Store led
- C – Residential led

##### Former Gas Works Site

- A – Employment led
- B – Residential led
- C – Retail

##### Cheapside

- A – Civic Quarter
- B – Mixed Use

## 5.5 Public Realm

With regard to public realm, the key issues concern the need to increase the functionality and usability of spaces. The existing square to the front of Festival Walk is under used and there is an opportunity to relocate this, through the process of redeveloping the Festival Walk shopping centre.

The issues for public realm are as follows:

- The need to make public spaces more functional and useable;
- How to enhance the quality of streetscapes and furniture.

Options:

- Relocate the existing public space at the front of Festival Walk to the site adjacent to the leisure centre;
- Implement a programme of environmental improvements
- Introduce a linear park linking the north and south of the town.

## 5.6 Access and Movement

Access and movement issues can be separated into the strategic and local.

At the **local level**, the issue concerns the level of vehicular restrictions that impede the movement of cars and delivery vehicles, and the limited movement patterns in and around the centre for pedestrians.

Issue:

- Lack of vitality caused by “over-engineered” streets and vehicular restrictions

Options

- Option 1: Town Centre high level of pedestrian and bus priority for part of or all day
- Option 2: Town Centre with car access permitted (with on street parking) for part of

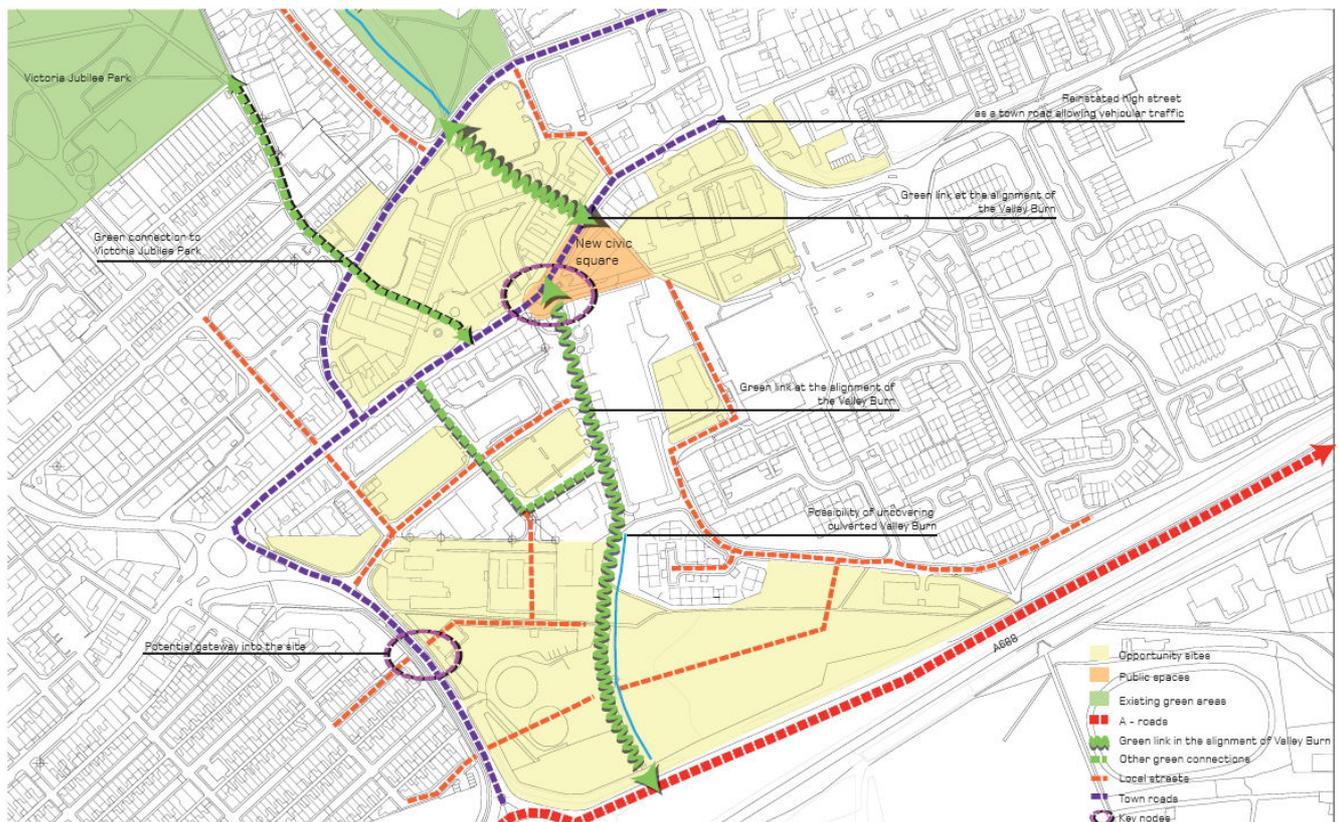
or all day (increase vitality with lower footfall)

In all cases:

- High quality town centre public realm, social space and diverse attractions
- Direct access to car parks from town roads, well signed
- Parking management strategy
- Public transport focus on High Street

Figure 5.12 below provides an illustration of the public realm and local transport and movement options.

**Figure 5.12: Public Realm, Access and Movement Options**



At the **strategic level**, it is important to understand the wider transportation patterns impacting on the settlement of Spennymoor. In this respect, we also consider it necessary to have regard to the possible future South Spennymoor extension and the need for integration with the wider development. We have therefore devised three strategic transportation options which reflect the need to integrate the town centre with South Spennymoor.

Issues:

- Future development south of the A688 is at risk of being unsustainable unless it is integrated with the Town Centre
- Lack of access routes to existing and emerging residential neighbourhoods.

Options:

- Option 1: Maximum Growth – integrate major southern urban extension
- Option 2: Medium Growth – integrate with more modest urban extension
- Option 3: Limited Growth – no major changes required to highway network

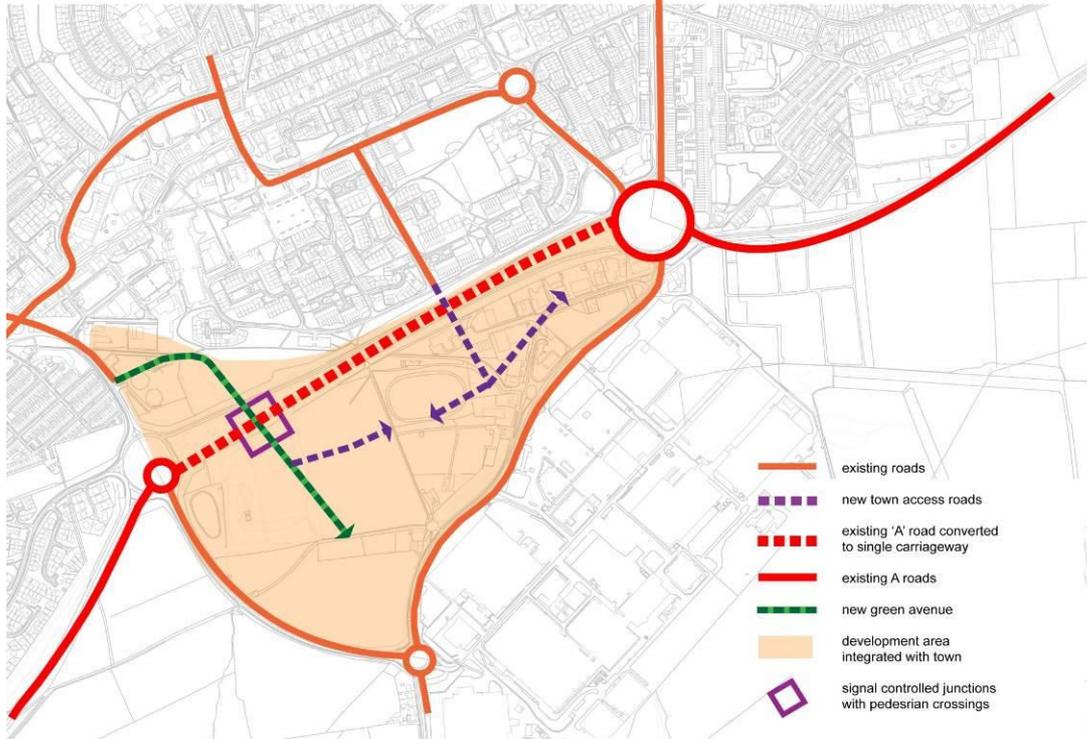
In all cases:

- Hierarchy of bypass, town roads, local streets and special links (foot, cycle, bus)
- Bishop Auckland – Spennymoor off-road cycle way extended through Spennymoor to Ferryhill

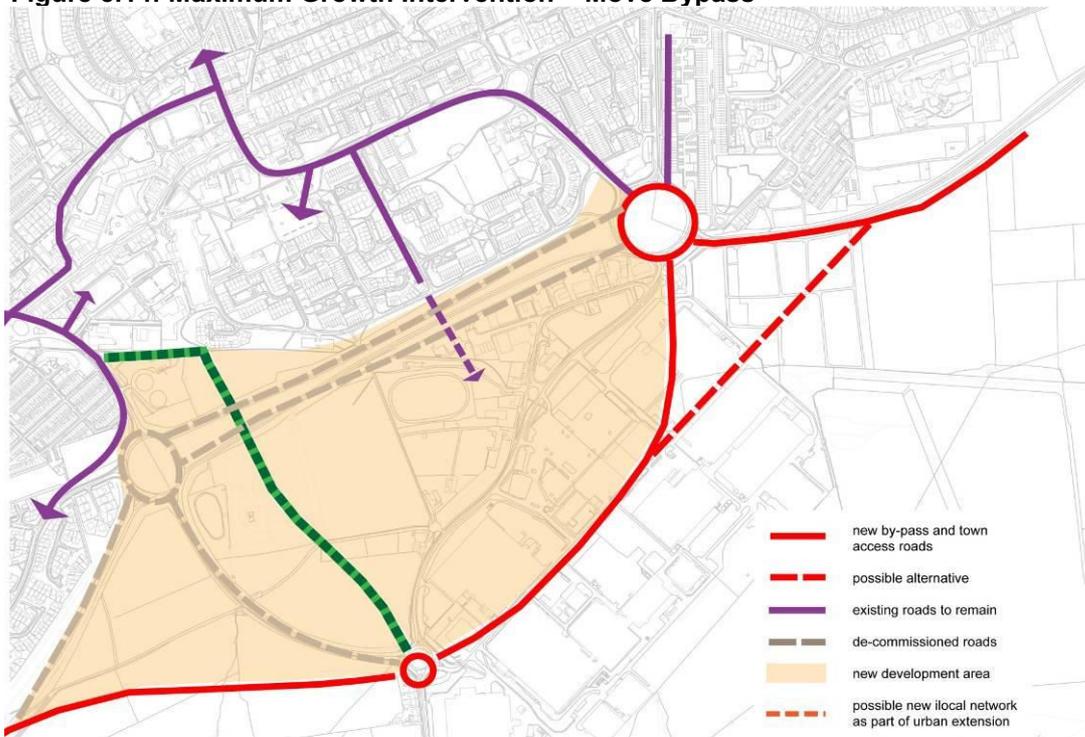
Figures 5.13 and 5.14 over the page provide illustrations of the medium and maximum growth scenarios.

**(N.B.** As these strategic options depend on development scenarios outside of the AAP boundaries, they are provided for contextual purposes in this Issues and Options report and will not form detailed proposals in the eventual AAP.)

**Figure 5.13: Medium Growth Intervention – Transform Bypass**



**Figure 5.14: Maximum Growth Intervention – Move Bypass**



## 5.7 Summary – The Options

	Issues	Options
Site Boundaries	<p>Does the town centre need to be expanded?</p> <p>Should retail activity be concentrated into a core area?</p>	<p>A. Expand town centre boundaries to include the former Gas Works site or retain existing Local Plan boundaries</p> <p>B. Introduce core and secondary policy areas or retain one policy area</p>
Sectors and Land Uses	<p>The town centre has a number of supermarkets and potentially more to be developed, is there an oversupply of grocery shopping?</p> <p>Town lacks identifiable areas of activity, for example comparable shopping and eateries and drinking establishments</p>	<p>A. Limit on the level of additional grocery retail development</p> <p>B. Zone parts of the town centre for specific uses to ensure protection of the shopping centre environment</p> <p>B. Promote areas of the town for mixed uses</p>
Development Sites	<p>Festival Walk is in poor condition, with a number of voids and is in need of renewal</p>	<p>A. Retail led mixed use</p> <p>B. Food Store led</p> <p>C. Residential led</p>
	<p>The former Gas Works site is a vacant site with a key strategic position</p>	<p>A. Employment led</p> <p>B. Residential led</p> <p>C. Retail</p>
	<p>Cheapside</p>	<p>Development of civic focus</p>
Public Realm	<p>The need to make public spaces more functional and useable</p> <p>How to enhance the quality of streetscapes and furniture.</p>	<p>A. Relocate the existing public space at the front of Festival Walk to the site adjacent to the leisure centre</p> <p>B. Implement a programme of environmental improvements</p> <p>C. Create north to south linear park.</p>

<p>Access and Movement (Strategic)</p>	<p>Future development south of the A688 is at risk of being unsustainable unless it is integrated with the Town Centre</p> <p>Lack of access routes to existing and emerging residential neighbourhoods.</p>	<p>A. Maximum Growth – integrate major southern urban extension</p> <p>B. Medium Growth – integrate with more modest urban extension</p> <p>C. Option 3: Limited Growth – no major changes required to highway network.</p>
<p>Access and Movement (Local)</p>	<p>Lack of vitality caused by “over-engineered” streets and vehicular restrictions.</p>	<p>A. Town Centre high level of pedestrian and bus priority for part of or all day</p> <p>B. Town Centre with car access permitted (with on street parking) for part of or all day (increase vitality with lower footfall)</p>

Stakeholder Questions:

Q6. Do you agree that the options represent the most appropriate scenarios for meeting the vision and objectives of the AAP?

Q7: Please indicate which of the options you prefer.

Q8: Please indicate if there are any other options that you think require consideration.

## 6.0 Approach to the Option Appraisal

The next stage in the process of developing the Area Action Plan will involve assessing the options to enable to prepare the Preferred Options Document. Our approach to assessing the options will involve focusing on the following four factors:

- Objectives (i.e. the proposed objectives set out earlier in this document);
- Delivery (i.e. the deliverability of the development proposals within a realistic timescale);
- Sustainability (which will draw on the Sustainability Appraisal work which accompanies the AAP process);
- Community objectives (which will include consideration of comments and representations made in response to this document).

We propose to carry-out a scoring matrix to demonstrate the contribution of each option to the various criteria, that will help to identify the preferred options. The table on the following page provides an example of the table structure that will be used.

**Table 6.1: Approach to Option Appraisal**

	Opt 1	Opt 2	Opt 3	Etc.
<b>Objectives</b>				
Enhances the retail offer through plugging key fascia gaps				
Expands the range of leisure activities and uses, including eating/drinking				
Develops the role of the centre as an employment and enterprise hub				
Expand the civic/public service role of the centre				
Improves access and movement patterns in and around the centre				
Promotes town centre living				
Creates a high quality, distinctive and attractive town centre environment				
Promotes sustainability and energy efficiency.				
<b>Delivery</b>				
Commercial Viability				
Identify and manage ownership constraints				
Market Attractiveness				
Funding Identified or Identifiable				
Technical and Infrastructure constraints identified and manageable				
<b>Sustainability</b>				
Enhances Environmental Quality				
Promotes Economic Sustainability				
Promotes Social and Cultural vitality				
<b>Policy and Community Objectives</b>				
Meets National Policy Requirements				
Adheres to the RSS				
Meets County requirements				
Is aligned with the LDF Core Strategy				
Meets the Community Strategy Objectives				
<b>Total</b>				

-  1 Negative Impact
-  2 Neutral Impact
-  3 Positive Impact



Q3: Do you agree with the vision?

Yes ..... No .....

Please explain:

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Q4: Do you agree with the objectives?

Yes ..... No .....

Please explain:

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Q5: Are there any other objectives that you feel require incorporating into this further?

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Q6. Do you agree that the options represent the most appropriate scenarios for meeting the vision and objectives of the AAP?

Yes ..... No .....

Q7 Please explain and indicate which of the options you prefer.

.....  
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Q8: Please indicate if there are any other options that you think require consideration.

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Please use the space provided below for any further comments:

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Please return questionnaires to:

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## **Sedgefield Borough Council**

### Spennymoor Area Action Plan Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report

Prepared by DTZ on behalf of Sedgefield Borough Council

August 2008



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## HOW TO COMMENT ON THIS REPORT

The Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report has been prepared for the Sedgefield Borough Council Local Development Framework to accompany the Spennymoor Area Action Plan Issues and Options Paper. Both are subject to a formal consultation exercise between August 2008 and October 2008. Following the consultation period, Sedgefield Borough Council will consider the responses and make any necessary amendments. The next stage of preparation for both the Area Action Plan (AAP) and the Sustainability Appraisal will then begin, and will be the subject of further consultation in the future. Comments are welcomed on this report. In particular, we are seeking views on the following areas:

- Has all the relevant background information been identified and correctly interpreted? (This includes other plans and programmes, and baseline data.)
- Have all the key issues for Spennymoor been properly identified?
- Have we chosen appropriate sustainability objectives for the AAP?
- Are there any other or better indicators we could have chosen?

Comments must be in writing, and should specify the matters/paragraphs to which they relate. Copies of the relevant documents have been placed in the libraries and are available for inspection at the Borough Council. The documents are also available on the Council's web site ([www.sedgefield.gov.uk](http://www.sedgefield.gov.uk)). Comments should be sent to:

Forward Planning Team  
Sedgefield Borough Council  
Council Offices  
Spennymoor  
DL16 6JQ

or by e-mail to: [cmyers@sedgefield.gov.uk](mailto:cmyers@sedgefield.gov.uk)

**ALL COMMENTS MUST BE SUBMITTED BY XXXX**

The Sustainability Appraisal Scoping exercise was carried out by DTZ on behalf of and in consultation with Sedgefield Borough Council.



## 1. Introduction

This Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report has been prepared for the Sedgefield Borough Local Development Framework (LDF) to accompany the Spennymoor Area Action Plan Issues and Options Report.

In accordance with European legislation and under Section 39(2) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, all LDFs must now be subjected to a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) throughout their preparation, in order to assess the extent to which they are contributing to the achievement of sustainable development. In preparing new or revised DPDs (Development Plan Documents) Local Planning Authorities must also conduct an environmental assessment in accordance with the requirements of European Directive 2201/42/EC (the Strategic Environmental Assessment directive), to test the full range of economic, social and environmental effects.

This is the second Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report to be prepared for the Sedgefield Borough LDF, following on from the LDF Scoping Report published in June 2005. A full Sustainability Appraisal of the Core Strategy Preferred Options report was published in June 2007.

### 1.1 Purpose of the Scoping Report

In line with Government guidance, the purpose of this SA Scoping report is to:

- Identify environmental, social and economic objectives identified in other Plans, Policies and Programmes that are relevant to the Spennymoor AAP;
- To assess the environmental, social and economic characteristics of the Spennymoor Area;
- To ensure that, as far as possible, the Spennymoor AAP achieves the objectives of sustainable development;
- To set out a framework for carrying out the remainder of the sustainability appraisal.

The Scoping Report has been written to conform to the SA Scoping Report for the LDF Core Strategy. Therefore, it follows the same structure and uses much of the data and indicators used in the LDF Scoping Report.

### 1.2 The Meaning of Sustainable Development

The goal of sustainable development is 'to enable all people throughout the world to satisfy their basic needs and enjoy a better quality of life, without compromising the quality of life of future generations.' (UK Sustainable Development Strategy, 'Securing the Future', 2005). Essentially, this means recognising the links between the social, economic and environmental factors, which affect people's lives, and working to develop integrated solutions, which balance the needs of these three factors.

The UK Sustainable Development Strategy sets out five shared UK principles that will be used to achieve the sustainable development purpose:

- **Living within Environmental Limits:** respecting the limit of the planet's environment, resources and biodiversity, to improve our environment and ensure that the natural resources needed for life are unimpaired and remain so for future generations.
- **Ensuring a Strong, Healthy and Just Society:** meeting the diverse needs of all people in existing and future communities, promoting personal wellbeing, social cohesion and inclusion, and creating equal opportunity for all.
- **Achieving a Sustainable Economy:** building a strong, stable and sustainable economy which provides prosperity and opportunities for all, and in which environmental and social costs fall on those who impose them (polluter pays), and efficient resource use is incentivised.
- **Promoting Good Governance:** actively promoting effective, participative systems of governance in all levels of society – engaging people's creativity, energy and diversity.
- **Using Sound Science Responsibly:** ensuring policy is developed and implemented on the basis of strong scientific evidence, whilst taking into account scientific uncertainty (through the precautionary principle) as well as public attitudes and values.

The government states that, for a policy to be sustainable, it must respect all of these principles. The AAP will therefore need to reflect these principles throughout its development.

These 5 principles have been reflected in the preparation of this Scoping Report, and are used to categorise the key issues to be addressed by the AAP and Sustainability Appraisal framework in Chapter 5.

### 1.3 The Sustainability Appraisal Process

In 2005, the government issued guidance that indicated it is possible to satisfy the requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal by a single combined process.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is a requirement under the European Directive 2001/42/EC. Certain plans and programmes that are likely to have significant effects on the environment now have to undergo a Strategic Environmental Assessment. This includes spatial plans at both the regional and local levels.

This process is intended to provide a high level of protection for the environment. The likely significant effects of implementing the plan need to be identified, described and evaluated, and reasonable alternatives considered. The SEA process focuses primarily on environmental effects. However, in order to ensure that the AAP complies with sustainability principles, the assessment of likely significant effects needs to be broadened to encompass social and economic effects as well.

Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is now mandatory, under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, for Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS), Development Plan Documents (DPD) and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD). It is an integral part of good plan making, and provides a mechanism for ensuring that sustainability objectives are translated into sustainable planning policies. An SA should identify and report on the likely significant

effects of a plan on social, environmental and economic issues, and highlight where these might need to be amended or changed. Government guidance on how to carry out a SA was issued by the ODPM in 2005, ‘Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Frameworks’.

There are many similarities between the assessments required of the SEA and SA. As a result, the ODPM guidance encompasses the requirements of the SEA Directive, and by carrying out a sustainability appraisal in accordance with the draft guidance, both sets of criteria should be met.

The SA consists of 5 stages as follows:

- Stage A: Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on the scope;
- Stage B: Developing and Refining Options and assessing effects;
- Stage C: Preparing the Sustainability Appraisal Report;
- Stage D: Consulting on the preferred options of the DPD and SA report;
- Stage E: Monitoring the significant effects of implementing the DPD.

This Scoping Report summarises the work which has been undertaken under Stage A of the SA process to date, as set out in more detail within the table below and for the purposes of consultation as set out at task A5.

<b>Stage</b>	<b>Sustainability Appraisal Task</b>
Task A1	Identify other policies, plans and programmes and sustainability objectives
Task A2	Collect and analyse baseline information
Task A3	Identify key sustainability issues and problems
Task A4	Develop the SA framework
Task A5	Consulting on the Scope of the SA

## 2. Spennymoor Area Action Plan

### 2.1.1 Purpose/scope of the document

An Area Action Plan is a type of Development Plan Document that forms part of the statutory planning framework (LDF – Local Development Framework) for the local area. It provides a means of guiding the pattern of development within a specific area of change. Planning Policy Statement 12 (PPS 12, June 2008): Creating Strong Safe and Prosperous Communities through Local Spatial Planning states that AAPs can be used to:

- Deliver planned growth areas;
- Stimulate regeneration;
- Protect areas particularly sensitive to change;
- Resolve conflicting objectives in areas subject to development pressures; or
- Focus the delivery of area based regeneration initiatives.

The purpose of the Spennymoor Area Action Plan (AAP) is “to provide a comprehensive regeneration framework that challenges current use, targets change and inspires action to guide future investment and activity in the town centre”.

Sedgefield Borough Council requires an AAP to:

- 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 where the physical offer that can be reconfigured to maximise investor appeal;
- Identify practical opportunities to develop/redevelop the centre to best serve its current and future needs;
- Create 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;
- 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 to prospective delivery partners.

### 2.1.2 Objectives

A series of objectives have been derived from a baseline assessment of the key strengths and weaknesses of the physical, social and economic environment of the town centre. Key opportunities have also been identified. These objectives will be further refined through consultation on the AAP issues and Options paper. The following objectives aim to drive-forward the vision for Spennymoor Town Centre:

1. Enhance the retail offer through plugging key fascia gaps

The Sedgefield Retail Gap Analysis demonstrated that there is currently an under-provision of floorspace in several retail categories including Hardware & Household Goods, Children & Infants Wear and Florists. There is also no presence of Toys/Games/Hobbies in the town centre. Key to enhancing the offer must be a strategy to broaden the range of shops and services.

2. Developing a leisure cluster for the town centre

Leisure is considered to be a key opportunity given the existence of the Spennymoor Leisure Centre in the town centre. The development of a cluster of leisure activities would include the following key priorities:

- Expand the leisure centre's role and offer and integration with other services;
- Promote the links between health services and leisure under the concept of "healthy living";
- Encourage specialist leisure retail opportunities;
- Promote an evening economy through cafes, bars and restaurants;
- Consider opportunities for new sports facilities linked to the leisure centre.

3. Develop the role of the centre as an employment and enterprise hub

In order to support the growth, diversification and regeneration of the town centre, there will need to be employment opportunities. This was highlighted in the Quality of Life Survey where one of the key priorities is to have a good employment base for local job opportunities. This is further supported by the RSS, Sedgefield Borough Community Strategy and Economic Development Strategy.

Concentration of office space within the town centre would create a more vibrant town centre which is easily accessible for all. Furthermore, the close proximity to Durham makes Spennymoor an attractive option for new investment.

4. Expand the civic/public service role of the centre

Local services can play an important role in bolstering the offer of the town centre, in concentrating footfall, and in facilitating investment. The rationalising and moderating of local services, including through the local government review may present some opportunities to facilitate this option.

5. Improve access and movement patterns in and around the centre

This objective will promote and support a range of access and movement types including improved bicycle access, pedestrian access from key housing areas and car parks, and will increase the passing trade on the High Street which is currently restricted to buses only.

An improved bus service which is legible and reliable for all will support the RSS's sustainable development agenda of ensuring good accessibility of homes to jobs and services by public transport.

6. Promote town centre living

The promotion of town centre living will bring a customer base into the town centre, create a natural surveillance to improve community safety and bring forward infill sites for development.

7. Create a high quality, distinctive and attractive town centre environment

The Retail Gap Analysis stated that improving the general ambience and environment would encourage more shoppers to visit the town centre. Furthermore, the Quality of Life survey highlighted the importance of a well maintained and safe environment, which can be achieved though high quality urban design is a key priority of theirs.

8. Promote sustainability and energy efficiency.

The promotion of a sustainable and energy efficient town centre should be achieved through functionality a form of development that encourages low car based transport and employs standards relating to the quality and type of construction.

## 3. Review of Other Relevant Plans and Programmes

### 3.1 Developing the database

The SEA directive recommends that a sustainability appraisal should take account of the relationship between other relevant policies plans and programmes and sustainability objectives. The directive specifically requires that environmental objectives established at international, European Community or national levels be taken into account along with other relevant documents such as the UK Sustainable Development Strategy, PPS's and a range of other local plans and strategies. In reviewing the appropriate documents, positive and negative relationships between the possible competing demands of social, environmental and economic objectives can be identified.

The Local Development Framework Sustainability Scoping Report addresses existing plans, policies and Strategies at National and international level down to District level. This review of documents was updated in 2007 as part of the Sustainability Appraisal process for the Core Strategy. As such, in order to avoid repetition, this report will concentrate just on the tier of documents specific to local circumstances, only referring to relevant higher tier documents where appropriate.

### 3.2 Limitations of the database

It is important to recognise the limitations of this database:

- The list of relevant plans and programmes cannot claim to be exhaustive. The limits of time and resources have constrained the search, and new documentation emerging since the search will not have been included.
- There is also an inherent problem in researching a broad range of plans and programmes in this way. It requires the researcher to be able to identify the full spatial planning implications of plans and programmes from a wide range of different professional disciplines (e.g.: health, waste, housing or wildlife). Many of these may be unfamiliar to the researcher, and therefore the potential influences on land use may not have been recognised. To help overcome this problem, a postal consultation was carried out early in the SA process with all the key agencies and stakeholders responsible for the main plans and programmes under review. However, the feedback from this was limited. It therefore cannot be assumed that, because a plan or programme is identified in Appendix IV, the full implications for the LDF have been identified.
- The LDF has a key role to play in achieving sustainable development. Yet it is also a key delivery mechanism for major strategic plans such as the Borough's Community Strategy. PPS 12 states that the LDF should *'express those elements of the community strategy that relate to the development and use of land.'* The Community Strategy, however, has not undergone a sustainability appraisal, and to date there is no mechanism in place for appraising the action plans and programmes arising from the Community Strategy via the LSP. This may give rise to inconsistencies or conflict as the LDF is developed.

### 3.3 Regional and Local Context

The Regional Spatial Strategy for the North East provides the long term land use framework for the region. There are three main principles in the RSS which underpin the policy framework: Renaissance of the North East, Sustainable Development and Sequential Approach to development and phasing.

The RSS states that there is a need to create and sustain a high quality of life for all. As such, the plan states that strategies, plans and programmes should promote sustainability by encouraging development within existing built up areas and locating development to minimise the need to travel and journey lengths. In particular, the need to support town centres and ensure that services can be accessed on foot or by public transport is highlighted.

As well as being consistent with national and regional policy, this report is in alignment with the Council's Core Strategy and its Sustainability Appraisal process.

### 3.4 Key findings from the Review

Appendix III contains a detailed table showing the plans and programmes which have been reviewed. The table highlights the implications of the plans, policies and programmes (PPPs) for the AAP and the SA. However, it is possible that conflicts or inconsistencies between the plans and programmes will arise when trying to translate their implications into AAP policies. A summary of the key messages from the document review is contained in the table below:

<b>Key messages from the review of Plans, Policies and Programmes (PPPs)</b>
Deliver sustainable development by tackling poverty, changing consumption and production patterns, conserving natural resources, tackling climate change and bringing health care up to basic minimum standards
Protect, conserve and enhance biodiversity and geo-diversity
Encourage energy efficiency, the use of renewable energy and low carbon generation/technology
Cut carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions
Ensure that everyone has the opportunity of living in a decent home, that they can afford, in a community where they want to live
Protect human health and the environment by reducing waste and promoting re-use and recycling
Living within environmental limits - protect air, land and water resources
Enhance community involvement and increase public involvement in decision-making and civic activity
Promote sustainable design
Provide good quality services for all
Raise the quality of life and the environment in rural areas
Provide a transport network that meets the needs of a growing economy and the increasing demand for travel while taking into consideration the environment
Reduce deprivation
Consider crime prevention and enhance community safety
Address the needs of the ageing population

Develop a tourism experience that matches the quality of the built heritage and natural environment offered in the County
Ensure that the historic environment is fully considered in the LDF
Promote the vitality and viability of town centres through planning for growth and the development of existing town centres
Promote sustainable, diverse and adaptable agricultural sectors
Encourage growth of new and existing telecommunications systems while reducing environmental impact
Ensure a good quality of life in both urban and rural areas by promoting access to high quality, well managed and maintained open spaces, sports and recreational facilities
Identify land at risk and the degree of risk from flooding
Stem population decline and urban-rural migration
Improve health and well-being while reducing health inequalities
Create, maintain and promote a range of industrial sites and premises, that enhance the image of the Borough as a location for new investment
Make cultural activity central to the lives of residents as they pursue lifelong learning and acquire new knowledge skills
Ensure children have access to education and provide life-long learning opportunities for all
Eradicate fuel poverty
Tackle and adapt to the effects of climate change

## 4. Baseline Information

Each of the policies contained within the AAP will have an impact upon the state of the Borough. In order to understand, predict or monitor these impacts, there first has to be an understanding of what currently exists within the Borough and where possible, within the area covered by the AAP. This is why the collation of baseline information is essential.

The information collated to date is summarised below, and presented in the table in Appendix IV. The baseline information assists the development of the AAP in three key areas.

1. It provides a 'snapshot' of the state of the Borough and Spennymoor at the current time.
2. It assists in identifying key issues and problems that will need to be addressed by the AAP.
3. It provides the basis for predicting and monitoring effects arising from the implementation of the AAP.

Compiling a comprehensive set of baseline information could potentially go on indefinitely. The limits of time and resources will inevitably constrain how much information can be collated, and a pragmatic approach is essential to determine the level of detail necessary for the effective delivery of the AAP. A detailed analysis of baseline data was undertaken at the beginning of the LDF process and this database has since been updated as part of the Core Strategy Sustainability Appraisal. The AAP boundary, which encompasses Spennymoor town centre, does not fit with ward boundaries or census output areas and as such data collection at this level is not possible. Therefore, this current SA takes the existing borough wide LDF baseline data base as a starting point, updating it where appropriate and supplementing it with further indicators derived at the local Spennymoor level where appropriate but recognising that there are limitations to the availability of data at the Spennymoor level. The following wards have been used to provide a socio-economic analysis of the town:

- Spennymoor Ward
- Low Spennymoor and Tudhoe Grange Ward
- Tudhoe Ward
- Middlestone ward

### 4.1 Background to Baseline Data Collection

During the collation of baseline data for the LDF it was recognised that, whilst there is a need to take a pragmatic approach to baseline data collection, it is also important to ensure that certain key areas of information are covered. The SEA Directive states that the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment need to be identified (Annex 1(b)), along with the environmental characteristics of the areas likely to be affected (Annex 1(c)). The draft ODPM guidance on Sustainability Appraisal widens the Directive's approach to encompass social and economic as well as environmental information. Given the all-encompassing nature of this approach, the ODPM guidance provides some initial areas for consideration when collating the information. These were used as the starting point for collating the data.

The data was compiled by consultation with organisations, individuals and Council departments; by examining plans and programmes collated as part of the preparation of the LDF and Sustainability Appraisal (including the Sedgefield Community Strategy); and via accessing relevant web-sites. The Sustainability Appraisal of the NE RSS (ERM, June 2008) also contains a comprehensive data set of regional information, which provides a useful comparator.

## 4.2 Limitations of baseline data

It is important to recognise the limitations attached to the baseline data.

- The level of detail contained within the database is inevitably limited by the time available.
- With a wide variety of data sources, inevitably there will be significant variations between the quality and level of detail. This could lead to misinterpretation of the data when trying to make comparisons or assess the findings.
- Geographical boundaries used by different agencies may not correspond, making it difficult to extract figures relating just to the local authority area or indeed more detailed data at a Spennymoor level.
- Finding information at the local level can be extremely difficult, especially for some topic areas where it may only be available at the regional level. While it may be possible to extrapolate to Borough level, it is extremely difficult to translate this to ward level.
- There will be variation between the age of the data. Some will have being constantly updated and some may be several years old.
- The data may not be presented or interpreted in the format, which would be most useful to the LDF or SA, which may mean that the information extracted will be inadequate or incomplete.
- There are information gaps where the data has not been collated at all, or where continued monitoring is not in place. This is particularly the case for biodiversity and economic data.
- Some information may only be qualitative in nature (e.g.: fear of crime, quality of life).
- The information collated is providing only a 'snapshot' of the current situation.

**A key consideration for the database is that it should be kept constantly under review.**

In order to effectively develop, monitor and appraise the LDF, it is essential that the local planning authority (or the authority as a whole), maintains and develops the database in order to ensure it is up-to-date and as comprehensive as possible. The means of doing this, including the potential resource issues, will have to be considered as part of the development of the LDF. (See Action Points raised in Chapter 8.) The baseline information collated to date is summarised below, under the categories of environmental, social and economic issues.

The full set of data is set out in Appendix IV.

## 4.3 Summary of baseline indicators

A brief summary of the key indicators in relation to Spennymoor is set out below under the core sustainability indicators.

### 4.3.1 Environment

The A688 which bypasses the main developed areas of the town acts as a barrier between the town and open space surrounding the greyhound track. The town centre and immediate surrounding areas appear to have a haphazard pattern of development with housing from various eras having replaced the historic terraces leading to a lack of coherency. To the north of the town centre there are two popular green open spaces: The Victoria Jubilee Park and Tudhoe Grange which is connected to the town centre through a swathe of landscape terminating on Oxford road. This is a successful open space and presents an opportunity to bring it more into the town. Victoria Jubilee Gardens is connected to the town via Villiers Street.

The main retail activity in Spennymoor town centre is concentrated along the High Street, Cheapside and Festival Walk. A number of budget supermarkets lie to the east and west of those streets which are surrounded by their respective car parks. Festival Walk currently contains a number of void units which detracts from the High Street which presents an unsightly frontage. The public square enclosed by Festival Walk lies in an inconspicuous place along the High Street and lacks activity. The centre lacks structure and clarity in terms of fronts and backs, streets and footpaths and general legibility. There are a number of underutilised sites within the centre including the former gas works site which contributes to this image of fragmentation.

The High Street contains some decent and higher quality historic buildings but it is diluted by Festival Walk and other 70s developments such as the bingo hall. The shop front signage throughout the town centre is incoherent and obtrusive. Around the backland fringes there are a number of shed-type developments from the 1980s and 1990s such as the Co-op and other supermarkets. The general image is one of incoherent architectural style, poor maintenance and average to poor building quality with very few exceptions. This detracts from the character and identity of Spennymoor.

The public realm has had some recent investment and some parts of the public realm dates back to the 1970s and 80s. The general impression is that the public realm lacks a coherent scheme that will reinforce the identity of the town. There are also oversized planters, and too much signage and street furniture.

### 4.3.2 People

Spennymoor has approximately 19,000 residents (as at the Census 2001). The resident age profile of Spennymoor and Sedgfield generally follows the regional and national profile overall. There is a lower proportion of children aged under 15 and a higher proportion of 46-60 year olds within Spennymoor. ONS forecasts that the Borough's population is expected to rise gradually from 88,000 to 91,600 by the year 2029. Spennymoor's population offers the potential to grow by a greater percentage increase as a result of a number of major housing developments coming forward in the town. In terms of ethnic mix, a higher than average number of people living within Sedgfield are classed as being white, with over 99% of people falling within this category.

In terms of the level of vacant dwellings, Spennymoor is in line with national averages with just 3% of dwellings recorded vacant as of the 2001 census. 68% of residents within the town

own their own homes, again in line with national averages, although levels of social renting are significantly higher than national averages at 33% compared to 19%. The town as a whole has a small proportion of detached homes and a higher proportion of semi-detached and terraced properties. There is a limited market for flatted accommodation, with potential for any further demand to be met within the town centre.

Slightly higher than average numbers of people travel to work in privately owned transport with correspondingly lower numbers of people using public transport to get to work. Slightly higher than average numbers of people walk to work in Spennymoor, however slightly lower than average numbers of people cycle to work. Furthermore a higher than average number of people don't own a car or van, approximately 30% compared to 27% nationally.

### **4.3.3 Economy**

Spennymoor has traditionally had a strong employment base with the Merrington Lane and Green Lane industrial areas on the edges of the town accommodating a wide range of employers. However, with many businesses closing their premises and relocating elsewhere, such as Electrolux and Thorne Lighting, the town employment base is being eroded.

The local workforce displays average levels of economic activity (43% in fulltime employment, which is above the national average). Particularly significant disparities from national averages are the low numbers of self employed residents (over 3% less than national levels) and the high numbers of permanently sick or disabled residents in Spennymoor (almost twice the national level). The number of students is also half the national average. The employment base is dominated by manufacturing. The occupation and skill profiles mirror the employment structure with lower income households (falling within the lower Mosaic Profile categories of blue collar enterprise, ties of the community and municipal dependency, as highlighted within the County Durham Economic Partnership Baseline study Prepared by Experian in 2006).

Travel to work patterns show that a large proportion of residents work locally within Spennymoor. According to the 2001 Census, approximately 40% of residents in Spennymoor work within 5km of their home.

In terms of retail activity, the Town Centre Survey 2007 illustrates that comparison goods take up the greatest level of floorspace. Although the number of vacant units have decreased in numbers, proportionally the level of voids has risen due to an overall decrease in retail unit numbers across the town between 2004 and 2007. Overall the amount of floorspace has decreased in the town and there is a concern in the number of hot food takeaways. Another strength of the town centre is that Zone A rental levels increased between 2003 and 2006 by 10%

## 5. Summary of Key Sustainability Issues

### 5.1 Background

In order to effectively address the development needs of the Borough, the Local Development Framework (LDF) Sustainability Scoping Report prepared in 2005 identified the key issues affecting the area. These issues which, were identified in order to influence the development of the LDF, also directed the objectives and indicators which were chosen for the Sustainability Appraisal framework.

The Sustainability issues identified as part of this initial exercise have been reviewed since the end of the consultation period on the LDF SA Scoping Report, in order to inform the development and sustainability testing of the Core Strategy, which was published in July 2007. In preparing this scoping report for the Spennymoor AAP, the Core Strategy Sustainability Issues have been taken as a starting point for the identification of Sustainability Issues affecting Spennymoor town centre.

The issues, summarised below, have been drawn from various sources. These include the baseline data already collated as part of the SA process, the other plans and policies affecting the LDF (including the Community Strategy), and preliminary consultations with a range of key contacts and organisations. A full list of issues is contained within Appendix V.

### 5.2 Living within Environmental Limits

The town is located in a borough which has a semi-rural character in parts. quality and concerns of litter, graffiti and fly tipping (as stated in the Community Strategy). Furthermore, the urban fringes of the town and the industrial areas need improvement. Environmental sustainability needs to be managed in terms of land use (developing on brownfield land first) and resources such as energy, water and recycling; and the potential for polluting activities need to be minimised. Access to services need to be improved, especially because of the low levels of car ownership. Public transport, therefore, needs to be improved and alternative travel schemes introduced. Climate change is one of the most serious issues facing the Borough. Therefore, levels of greenhouse gasses, energy consumption and flood risk need to be monitored.

#### Implications for the AAP

- Improve the quality of environmental information used to monitor environmental quality in the town centre;
- Improve environmental quality generally;
- Urban Fringe needs to be Improved;
- Brownfield sites in the town centre need to be brought forward into productive use;
- Identify measures for reducing levels of water and energy consumption through, for example, smart design and promotion of renewable forms of energy;
- Facilitate the creation of a compact centre, that is well connected and accessible by public transport;
- Encourage town centre living;
- Maximise opportunities for public art;

- Encourage sustainable forms of construction, to reduce waste and encourage recycling and energy/water efficiency;
- Encourage sustainable urban drainage schemes (SUDS);
- Designation of multi-user routes, and design of new developments to move away from favouring car travel;
- Promotion of tree planting.

### 5.3 Ensuring a Strong, Healthy and Just Society

Sedgefield faces a number of social issues, which will be addressed through the LDF and where appropriate the Spennymoor AAP. These issues include an ageing population, deprivation and health issues. Health issues have been made worse by poor levels of physical activity, poor diet and smoking. Access to adequate health care is an important issue. Educational achievement is relatively low, an issue which should be rectified in order to support the development of a skilled workforce and healthy economy. Housing affordability needs to be considered in order to ensure the existence of a well balanced housing market.

The town centre needs to revive its vitality and viability, whilst retaining existing services and promoting new services. This could be achieved through the development of further facilities in the public and community sector. The community strategy states that Spennymoor should be a place where people can live healthy, active and fulfilling lives as part of vibrant and strong community, and where people can access the housing they want in attractive and safe neighbourhoods.

#### Implications for the AAP

- Bring forward residential development sites which meet the needs of the community and also encourage a more diverse socio-economic mix;
- Improve the Town Centre's role as a focus for high quality public service delivery;
- Inclusive design for disabled users;
- High quality facilities such as leisure centres;
- Attract seasonal events and create an events space;
- Provide a secure, safe environment with natural surveillance.

### 5.4 Achieving a Sustainable Economy

Although the Borough suffers from high levels of unemployment, Spennymoor has a higher than average level of those in full time employment. The area has historically had a heavy reliance on manufacturing with the Borough seeing a low level of business start ups. As well as NetPark, there are currently proposals for a new development at Durham Gate which would, if granted planning permission, provide the area with the opportunity to attract further new business to the town.

The community strategy for Spennymoor wants high quality businesses which can prosper and where local people have the confidence and skills to access the jobs that they offer.

#### Implications for the AAP

- Recognise and Promote the town centre as an employment centre;
- Improving viability as a shopping centre;
- Consider opportunities for initiative workspace to accommodate local businesses;



### **5.4.1 Promoting Good Governance**

There is a perceived strong sense of community within the Borough. However, the Sedgefield Borough Council Quality of Life Survey (2008) suggested that this could be improved in Spennymoor by increasing community awareness of the existing local residents association within the town.

#### **Implications for the AAP**

- Engage effectively with the community in all aspects of planning, through the Statement of Community Involvement process;
- Fully involve the traders in the process of town centre management.

### **5.4.2 Using Sound Science Responsibly**

The SA process has collated a significant amount of information as part of its review of plans and programmes, and through gathering baseline information. However, a number of significant gaps in information have also been identified. It is essential that this information be updated and improved, and kept constantly under review, in order to effectively develop, monitor and appraise the AAP. This will have resource implications. However, given that this information may have wider benefits throughout the local authority, consideration might be given to how baseline information may be kept up-to-date at a corporate level, to benefit all corporate plans.

#### **Implications for the AAP**

- Ensure that the baseline information is kept up-to-date and relevant;
- Consider certain forms of renewable technology and sustainable construction techniques in order to support the reduction of CO<sub>2</sub>emissions.

## 6. The Sustainability Framework: Objectives and Indicators

### 6.1 Background

The purpose of Sustainability Appraisal is to ensure that sustainability considerations are better integrated into the preparation and adoption of plans. In order to assess how adequately a plan is achieving this, it is necessary to test its policies against a set of sustainability objectives and criteria and also, going forwards, to monitor how effectively they are helping to deliver those sustainability objectives. For this reason, a set of sustainability indicators needs to be developed, measuring each of the sustainability objectives. This is the purpose of the Sustainability Framework, which comprises a set of objectives and indicators.

The framework will be used to test the compatibility of the Spennymoor AAP aims and objectives, and to appraise all policies and spatial options put forward as part of the AAP production process over the next few months.

### 6.2 Selecting the Objectives and Indicators

The 2005 LDF Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report, set out a series of sustainability objectives and indicators which were derived from the information gathered from the context review, baseline, and sustainability issues, the requirements of the SA Guidance and SEA Directive, and the consultation responses from the SA Scoping Report. These draft sustainability objectives were revised as a result of the responses received from the consultation on the Scoping Report and an audit trail listing the required changes is available in Appendix 4 of the Core Strategy Full Sustainability Appraisal.

As has been noted earlier within this document, for each Local Development Document the general framework developed in 2005 has to be adapted to relate to the scope of the DPD to be assessed. This involves 'scoping out' those issues not relevant to that particular document to create a slimmed down framework. As such, the framework identified within the 2005 LDF Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report has been reviewed and the sustainability objectives and indicators remain the same.

The revised list of sustainability objectives are below in Table 6.1.

**Table 6.1**

<b>Sustainability Objectives</b>
1. To reduce poverty and social exclusion
2. To improve the health and well-being of the population
3. To improve education, skills and lifelong learning
4. To provide everybody with the opportunity to live in a decent and affordable home
5. To improve community safety and reduce the fear of crime
6. To improve the quality of the local environment
7. To ensure all groups have improved accessibility to essential services

8. To support and enhance community activity and increase public involvement in all decision making
9. To improve tourism, culture and leisure opportunities
10. To reduce the harmful impact of transport
11. To conserve and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity
12. To protect, maintain and enhance the distinctive appearance and character of the landscape, the historic environment and built heritage
13. To protect and enhance the natural resources of air, water and land
14. To reduce contributions to, and alleviate the impact of, climate change
15. To reduce the production of waste and encourage re-use and recycling
16. To encourage, support and promote a competitive and diverse business industry
17. To enhance the image of the area as a business location
18. To encourage the social and environmental performance of the economy

### 6.3 Decision-making criteria

In the development of these objectives, it was considered useful to include a number of questions for each of the objectives. These questions have been reviewed and modified for the purposes of assessing the AAP and are presented in Appendix VI as the ‘decision-making criteria’, and should be used as a prompt when assessing the AAP policies against the sustainability objectives.

### 6.4 Indicators

A number of indicators have also been listed for each of the sustainability objectives in Appendix VI. These are a means of measuring how far the AAP is helping achieve the sustainability objectives. In choosing the indicators, it was important to try to identify those that would measure, as far as possible, the contribution that the AAP was making towards achieving the objective. Inevitably this is very difficult in some cases, and for nearly all the indicators, there will be a number of influencing factors determining the achievement of the objective – not just the AAP.

The key consideration used in trying to identify indicators was whether the AAP would be one of the major influencing factors. For some of the objectives, it has not been possible to identify sufficient indicators, and it is hoped that the consultation process will supply some additional input for these. Other factors which influenced the choice of indicator included:

- ease of measurement;
- simplicity, and ease with which it could be interpreted and used;
- whether a target could be applied or selected in due course (see below);
- whether it will show trends over time.

The table in Appendix VI categorises each of the indicators in terms of how easy it might be to collate the information required.

## 7. Testing the AAP aims and objectives against the Sustainability Framework

### 7.1 Methodology Used for Testing Aims and Objectives

It is important to ensure at the outset that the objectives of the AAP are in accordance with sustainability principles. Doing this should help set the context for the development of AAP policies and spatial options, to ensure that they broadly comply with sustainability principles (although they will still need to be subjected to a detailed SA).

In order to test the objectives, a simple compatibility test has been used, as set out below. This test uses the categories set out within the Core Strategy Sustainability Appraisal.

Seven categories were used to test the compatibility of the AAP objectives against the SA Framework:

✓✓	<b>Likely to have a very positive effect</b>
✓	<b>Likely to have a positive effect</b>
0	<b>No significant effect or no clear link</b>
?	<b>Uncertain or insufficient information to determine effect</b>
x	<b>Likely to have a negative impact</b>
xx	<b>Likely to have a very negative impact</b>
I	<b>Effect depends on implementation</b>

In carrying out the assessments, each AAP aim/objective was considered in terms of how much it would impact upon the achievement of each of the Sustainability Objectives as set out in the Sustainability Framework.

#### Determining the Outcome

Despite attempts to make the Sustainability Objectives and supporting questions as specific as possible, it is inevitable that the appraisal will, to a certain extent, be based upon subjective assessments. The input and comments from a wide range of external organisations via the consultation process will be invaluable here, to ensure that there is a level of consensus over the outcomes. However, the sustainability impact of any of the AAP objectives will vary greatly depending upon how that objective is implemented, and also what else is happening in the town and beyond. This is the reason, as in the Core Strategy SA Report, for the inclusion of the 'I' category, above, to highlight this level of uncertainty.

#### Using the Findings

In considering the outcomes of the compatibility test, efforts should be concentrated on those AAP objectives identified as either red or amber, i.e.: 'conflicting' or 'variable', in terms of their effects upon the Sustainability Objectives. Ideally, the intention should be to reword or amend those aims/objectives to convert their effects to green ('compatible') or yellow ('neutral'). However, it has to be recognised that in some instances it will be very difficult to avoid conflict.



## 7.2 Testing AAP Objectives - Key Findings

Table 7.1 shows the compatibility testing between the AAP Objectives against the Sustainability Objectives. This helps to identify where there might be tensions between the objectives, which in turn may influence the decisions taken when appraising the LDF policies and plans. Although generally there was a relative degree of compatibility, there were also a number of areas of uncertainty.

There are a number of areas within the matrix which are ranked as having 'uncertain' or 'Effects dependant on implementation' compatibility, indicating potential of areas of conflict or areas where conflict will be dependent upon the way in which the activity is implemented. This is where it has been assumed that objectives likely to involve development (e.g.: housing, economic development) could have a negative impact on the environment, depending upon how development is implemented. This highlights that the objectives could still be achieved by making efficient use of land and resources, considering the use of sustainable construction techniques and ensuring that the countryside and historic environment is preserved or enhanced.

It is important to be aware of these tensions between objectives when carrying out the AAP appraisal, as it is likely that these will be the areas where it will be necessary to explore mitigation or alternatives to try to reduce the level of conflict when formulating AAP policies.

**Table 7.1: Compatibility of AAP Objectives with Sustainability Appraisal Objectives**

		AAP Objectives									
		Enhance the retail offer through plugging key fascia gaps	Expand the range of leisure activities and uses, including eating/drinking	Develop the role of the centre as an employment and enterprise hub	Expand the civic/public service role of the centre	Improve access and movement patterns in and around the centre	Promote town centre living	Create a high quality, distinctive and attractive town centre environment	Promote sustainability and energy efficiency		
<b>SA OBJECTIVES</b>											
1	Reduce poverty & social exclusion	0	✓	✓	✓✓	✓	✓	✓✓	0	✓✓	
2	Improve health & well-being	0	✓	0	✓✓	✓✓	I	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	
3	Improve education, skills & lifelong learning	0	0	0	✓✓	0	0	0	0	0	
4	Provide decent homes	0	0	0	0	0	I	0	0	0	
5	Improve c'ty safety & reduce fear of crime	0	I	0	0	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	0	0	
6	Improve quality of where people live	✓	✓✓	0	✓✓	✓✓	I	✓✓	✓	✓	
7	Improved accessibility	0	I	0	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓	
8	Enhance sense of community	0	✓	0	✓✓	0	✓	✓✓	0	0	
9	Improve tourism, culture and leisure opportunities	✓✓	✓✓	0	✓	0	0	✓✓	0	0	
10	Reduce harmful impact of transport	0	I	I	✓	I	✓	0	✓	✓	
11	To conserve and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity	0	?	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
11	Quality of landscapes/townscapes	I	I	0	I	0	I	✓✓	0	0	
12	Protect/enhance air, water and land	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	✓✓	
13	Climate change	0	0	0	0	I	0	0	0	✓✓	
14	Reduce waste	0	I	0	0	0	0	0	0	✓✓	
15	Competitive & diverse business industry	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	0	0	0	0	0	0	
16	Quality as business location	✓	✓	✓✓	0	✓	0	✓✓	0	✓	
17	Social/Env. performance of industry	✓	0	I	0	0	0	0	0	✓✓	

## 8. Proposals for Sustainability Appraisal Report

This document will be sent to the Strategic Environmental Bodies for a six week consultation period. The comments made on this document will then be taken into account when preparing the finalised sustainability framework which will be used to test the emerging Area Action Plan and the Preferred Options set out within it. Where necessary further assessment of the options will be undertaken, along with any updating of the baseline data, plans and policies.

The draft Sustainability Appraisal report will be published with the preferred options document and will then be reviewed in the light of comments received. The results of the final assessment will be set out in a final Sustainability Appraisal report incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment.

The final Sustainability Appraisal report will be published at the same time as the submission documents, which will be subject to Independent Examination.

Once the examination has taken place and the Inspector has published his binding report the Spennymoor Area Action Plan Local Development Document will be adopted by Sedgefield Borough Council. At the same time the Sustainability Appraisal will also be published, along with the necessary statements required by the legislation stating how the effects of the plan have been accounted for.

Once the Spennymoor Area Action Plan Local Development Document has been adopted the effects of it will be monitored. This will include the monitoring of the sustainability indicators set out in section 6 of this document. The monitoring process will help measure how well the plan contributes to sustainable development.

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# Item 5

## SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Council Chamber,  
Council Offices,  
Spennymoor

Tuesday,  
2 September 2008

Time: 10.00 a.m.

**Present:** Councillor A. Gray (Chairman) and  
Councillors B.F. Avery J.P, D.R. Brown, V. Chapman, D. Farry,  
T.F. Forrest, Mrs. J. Gray, B. Haigh, T. Hogan and B.M. Ord

**In Attendance:** Councillors G.C. Gray and B. Lamb

**SL.6/08 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**  
No declarations of interest were received.

**SL.7/08 MINUTES**  
The Minutes of the meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> June 2008 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. (For copy see file of Minutes).

**SL.8/08 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REVIEW GROUP REPORT - REVIEW OF RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION - CABINET RESPONSE AND ACTION PLAN**  
Consideration was given to a report detailing progress to date on the Cabinet's response and action plan following its consideration of the recommendations arising from the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Review of Recruitment and Retention. (For copy see file of Minutes).

With regard to Recommendation 1 – **Turnover broken down by Department be adopted as a Performance Indicator to be monitored by Human Resources and reported periodically to Members** –it was reported that Corporate turnover had been reported to Strategic Leadership Group on a quarterly basis.

It was noted that previously the turnover figure had been calculated to include all leavers such as those employees retiring, TUPE transferring or whose contracts had ended as well as those resigning. It was, however, viewed that this was not a true representation of turnover.

Therefore, during 2007/08 the definition of the Indicator was changed to include only those employees voluntarily leaving the authority by resigning or moving to another authority.

Members noted that the corporate turnover for the financial year 2007/08 was 5.34%. This compared favourably to the average turnover of 13% for the public sector.

Details of turnover by department for 2007/08 were set out in the report.

With regard to Recommendation 2 – **Vacant Posts which have not been filled within 6 months of the first advertisement be reported to Members** – it was reported that as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2008 two posts had remained vacant for 6 months or over and had been advertised but not filled.

It was highlighted that this decrease was due to new procedures implemented in preparation for Local Government Re-organisation. A number of vacancies had been frozen and would therefore not be advertised to protect permanent employees in the event of a potential redundancy situation.

In response to a Member's question regarding the transfer of staff to new Unitary Authority it was explained that at the point of transfer each Local Authority would inform the new authority of the total number of staff transferring. This figure would exclude any job vacancies.

Members expressed their appreciation of the work carried out by employees of Sedgefield Borough Council and praised the good working relationship between Members' and Officers.

*AGREED: That the Committee is satisfied that the actions following the Overview and Scrutiny Review have been implemented and that recruitment and retention will continue to be monitored through the Strategic Leadership Performance Update reports.*

#### **SL.9/08**

#### **WORK PROGRAMME**

Consideration was given to the Work Programme for the Strategic Leadership Overview and Scrutiny Committee. (For copy see file of Minutes).

*AGREED : That the Committee's Work Programme as outlined in the report be agreed.*

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#### **ACCESS TO INFORMATION**

Any person wishing to exercise the right of inspection, etc., in relation to these Minutes and associated papers should contact Mrs. L. Walker Tel 01388 816166 ext 4237 email [lwalker@sedgefield.gov.uk](mailto:lwalker@sedgefield.gov.uk)

# Item 6

## SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL AREA 1 FORUM

Village Hall,  
Green

Monday,  
1 September 2008

Time: 6.30 p.m.

- Present:**
- Councillor A. Smith (Chairman) – Sedgefield Borough Council and
  - Councillor Mrs. A.M. Armstrong – Sedgefield Borough Council
  - Councillor A. Gray – Sedgefield Borough Council
  - Councillor Mrs. E. Maddison – Sedgefield Borough Council
  - Councillor B.M. Ord – Sedgefield Borough Council
  - Councillor K. Thompson – Sedgefield Borough Council
  - Councillor N.C. Foster – Durham County Council
  - Inspector W. Bentham – Durham Constabulary
  - PC J. Rielly – Durham Constabulary
  - C. Darkes – Greenways Residents Association
  - G. Darkes – Greenways Residents Association
  - A. Lamb – Greenways Residents Association
  - B. Lamb – Greenways Residents Association
  - Councillor Miss S.J. Armstrong – Spennymoor Town Council
  - Councillor J. Graham – Spennymoor Town Council
  - Councillor I. Harrington – Spennymoor Town Council
  - Councillor F. Ryder – Spennymoor Town Council
  - Councillor F. Walker – Spennymoor Town Council
  - S. Armstrong – Spennymoor Town Council
  - M. Rowe – Spennymoor Town Council
  - Councillor C. Maddison – Elected Member Tudhoe/Low Spennymoor  
Ward/Spennymoor Town Centre
  - H. Moorhouse – Kirk Merrington Park Improvement Team
  - L. Moorhouse – Kirk Merrington Park Improvement Team
  - S. Moorhouse – Kirk Merrington Park Improvement Team
  - J. Walton – Kirk Merrington Park Improvement Team
  - D. Brown – Spennymoor Boxing Academy
  - G. Courtney – Spennymoor Boxing Academy
  - D. Ellis – Spennymoor Boxing Academy
  - G. Ellis – Spennymoor Boxing Academy
  - R. Ellis – Spennymoor Boxing Academy
  - B. Green – Spennymoor Boxing Academy
  - N. McCormick – Spennymoor Boxing Academy
  - L. Cassie – Local Resident
  - E. Jowitt – Local Resident
- In attendance:** Mrs. L. Goundry, Miss L. Kitto and Mrs. N. Woodgate (Sedgefield Borough Council)
- Apologies:**
- Councillor Mrs. B. Graham – Sedgefield Borough Council and
  - Councillor J.M. Khan – Sedgefield Borough Council
  - Councillor C. Nelson – Sedgefield Borough Council
  - Councillor W. Waters – Sedgefield Borough Council
  - Councillor Mrs. E.M. Wood – Sedgefield Borough Council
  - D. Gordon – Local Resident

**AF(1)7/08 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Mrs. A.M. Armstrong indicated that she would be declaring a personal and prejudicial interest in Item No : 5 – Sedgefield Borough Local Improvement Programme – as she was a Member of Sedgefield Borough Cabinet.

**AF(1)8/08 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> June, 2008 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. (For copy see file of Minutes).

**AF(1)9/08 POLICE REPORT**

Inspector W. Bentham, Community Inspector for Spennymoor and Ferryhill, was present at the meeting to give a report on crime statistics, initiatives and road safety for the area.

It was noted that PC Ruth Taylor and PC Peter Hall were new officers within the Neighbourhood Policing Team.

The reported crime figures for June, July and August, 2008 were as follows :-

	<u>June :</u>	<u>July :</u>	<u>August :</u>
Vehicle Crime	9	9	5
Violent Crime	19	13	12
Burglary (Dwelling)	3	6	3
Burglary (Other)	6	11	1
Rowdy Nuisance	76	102	92
Criminal Damage	29	29	46

With regard to road traffic accidents the figures were as follows :-

	<u>June :</u>	<u>July :</u>	<u>August :</u>
Damage Only Accidents	12	13	6
Minor Injuries	2	0	4
Fatalities	0	0	0

It was noted that violent crime in June had increased, however, there was no particular trend or repeat location barring three calls to Stratton Street.

Violent crime had declined in July, again with no particular trends. There had been two calls to the locality of the Penny Gill, Spennymoor.

Burglary dwelling incidents had increased in June and July, however, for both months eight people had been arrested for burglary crimes.

Following those arrests the figures had reduced back to normal in August. Criminal damage figures had significantly increased in August as a result of one individual who had punctured 21 tyres over two nights in Spennymoor. The individual was currently on bail for those offences and awaiting the CPS prosecution decision.

PC J. Rielly reported that the actions taken in respect of the Neighbourhood Priority for the Drake Street area had proven to be successful. The main individual involved in the incidents had vacated the street.

Members were informed that consultation was taking place with regard to the increased number of traffic problems in Kirk Merrington. Once the findings were completed, the area would be monitored.

With regard to Tweed Road, it was reported that rowdy nuisance and crime based incidents at the properties were the main problems. The gathering of youths and drinking was not a problem in the area, however, it was suggested that the area be monitored and reviewed at the next meeting.

The Forum was asked to set one new Neighbourhood Priority to replace Drake Street.

A query was raised regarding anti-social behaviour and youths drinking in Whitworth Lane.

Members also reported that Dene Valley and Jubilee Park were areas of concern, as youths were congregating and drinking alcohol. Specific reference was made to the number of empty alcohol bottles found in both areas.

It was queried whether drug statistics could be produced for Area 1. In response Members were informed that figures would be produced for the next meeting of the Area Forum.

Consideration was given to all the suggested areas.

Members of the Forum agreed the following as Neighbourhood Priorities for Area 1:-

1. Dene Valley/Jubilee Park
2. Kirk Merrington
3. Tweed Road

It was noted that actions taken in respect of the Priority areas would be reported at the next meeting of the Forum in October, 2008.

- AGREED :*
1. *That the information be noted.*
  2. *That the Neighbourhood Policing Priorities for Area 1 Forum be as follows :-*

- *Dean Valley/Jubilee Park*
- *Kirk Merrington*
- *Tweed Road*

**AF(1)10/08      SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH LOCAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME**

**NB :**      **In accordance with Section 81 of the Local Government Act 2000 and the Member's Code of Conduct, Councillor Mrs. A.M. Armstrong declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the above item and left the meeting for the duration of the discussion on the item.**

Consideration was given to a report of the Assistant Chief Executive regarding the above. (For copy see file of Minutes).

Members were informed that the cut-off date for new LIP applications was 31<sup>st</sup> July, 2008. The Area 1 Forum had been allocated £836,000 of LIP capital resources between 2006 and 2009. It was reported that money allocated for Area 1 was over-subscribed by £310,317.

The project proposals to be considered were :-

- Kirk Merrington MUGA – Kirk Merrington Community Association
- Tudhoe Moor Play Area – Spennymoor Town Council
- Jubilee Park Play Improvements – Spennymoor Town Council
- Spennymoor Boxing Club – Spennymoor Boxing Academy

Members were informed that the following two projects were discussed at the Area Forum held on 16<sup>th</sup> June, 2008.

Information on these projects had been included in this report. Both projects had already been considered and supported by the Area Forum, however, had not yet been approved by Sedgefield Borough Council.

- New Life Christian Centre refurbishment – New Life Christian Centre
- St. Paul's Parish Hall Community Regeneration Project – Applicant - St. Paul's Parish Church

It was queried whether the criteria for LIP applications had changed. In response it was explained that there had been no changes in criteria for applications. However, more emphasis would be placed on match funding and deliverability of project.

A concern was raised regarding Jubilee Park Play Improvements and the number of youths the project would take off the streets. In response the applicant explained that the application would hopefully lead to a significant increase in youth users. The project would update and improve the amenities on the park, the main features on the scheme would include : junior play equipment, MUGA, skate park facility, fitness/adult equipment, one piece of toddler equipment, youth shelter, seating, litter bins, signage

and landscaping. The applicant identified that the project would have many impacts on the residents and community of Spennymoor including Healthy Community, Safer Community and reduction in Anti-Social Behaviour.

Neil McCormick, Spennymoor Boxing Club, explained that this project would also provide a reduction in anti-social behaviour. The existing gym would not provide enough space to allow new Members to join the Club. The project would consist of moving all of the existing gym to the present squash court area of Spennymoor Leisure Centre. The Club would not only provide exercise but also would teach discipline, manners and respect for the community. The aim would be to include female membership as well as increasing junior and male membership. The long term impact would be the possibility of creating champion boxers with a number of members potentially being considered to represent Great Britain in the London Olympics in 2012.

Consideration was given to all the project proposals. Members of the Forum agreed to support all projects.

*AGREED : That the projects be supported.*

**AF(1)11/08**

**QUESTIONS**

Geoff Darkes, Greenway Residents Association, informed Members of a meeting to be held regarding Spennymoor Regeneration. The meeting would be held at Spennymoor Town Hall on 25<sup>th</sup> September, 2008 at 7.00 p.m.

**AF(1)12/08**

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Monday 27<sup>th</sup> October, 2008 at 6.30 p.m. at Community Centre, Tudhoe.

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**ACCESS TO INFORMATION**

Any person wishing to exercise the right of inspection, etc., in relation to these Minutes and associated papers should contact Miss. L. Kitto Tel 01388 816166 ext 4508 email: [lkitto@sedgefield.gov.uk](mailto:lkitto@sedgefield.gov.uk)

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# Item 7

## SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL EMPLOYMENT ISSUES PANEL

Conference Room 2,  
Council Offices,  
Spennymoor

Thursday,  
11 September 2008

Time: 10.30 a.m.

**Present:** Councillor A. Hodgson (Chairman) and  
Councillors A. Gray, G.C. Gray and A. Smith

**Apologies:** Councillors B. Haigh, D.M. Hancock and Mrs. E. Maddison

**EIP.5/08      DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**  
Members had no interests to declare.

**EIP.6/08      MINUTES**  
The Minutes of the meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> July, 2008 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

*RESOLVED:      That in accordance with Section 100(a)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they may involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 of Schedule 12a of the Act.*

**EIP.7/08      APPLICATION FOR FLEXIBLE RETIREMENT**  
The Panel considered a report of the Chief Executive regarding an application for flexible retirement. (For copy see file of Minutes).

Members were reminded that in accordance with the Council's adopted Flexible Retirement Policy all applications for flexible retirement must be considered on an individual basis and decisions made on the merits of each case. Requested reductions in hours and/pr grade must be compatible with the business requirements of the Council and should only be allowed in circumstances where the request did not adversely effect Council services.

The Panel considered the application, taking account of the evaluation criteria set out in paragraph 3.3 of the report.

It was noted that the applicant had requested to reduce his working week to 3 days per week from 1<sup>st</sup> December 2008, decreasing to 2 days from 1<sup>st</sup> December 2009 onwards, in accordance with the policy.

*RESOLVED :      That the application for flexible retirement be approved.*

### **ACCESS TO INFORMATION**

Any person wishing to exercise the right of inspection, etc., in relation to these Minutes and associated papers should contact Mrs. Gillian Garrigan, Spennymoor 816166 Ext 4240 ggarrigan@sedgefield.gov.uk

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# Item 8

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